THE NEW REPUBLIC

UNE 5, 2000

Is Barak Losing Israel? Yossi Klein Halevi

Is Bush Catholic? Franklin Foer

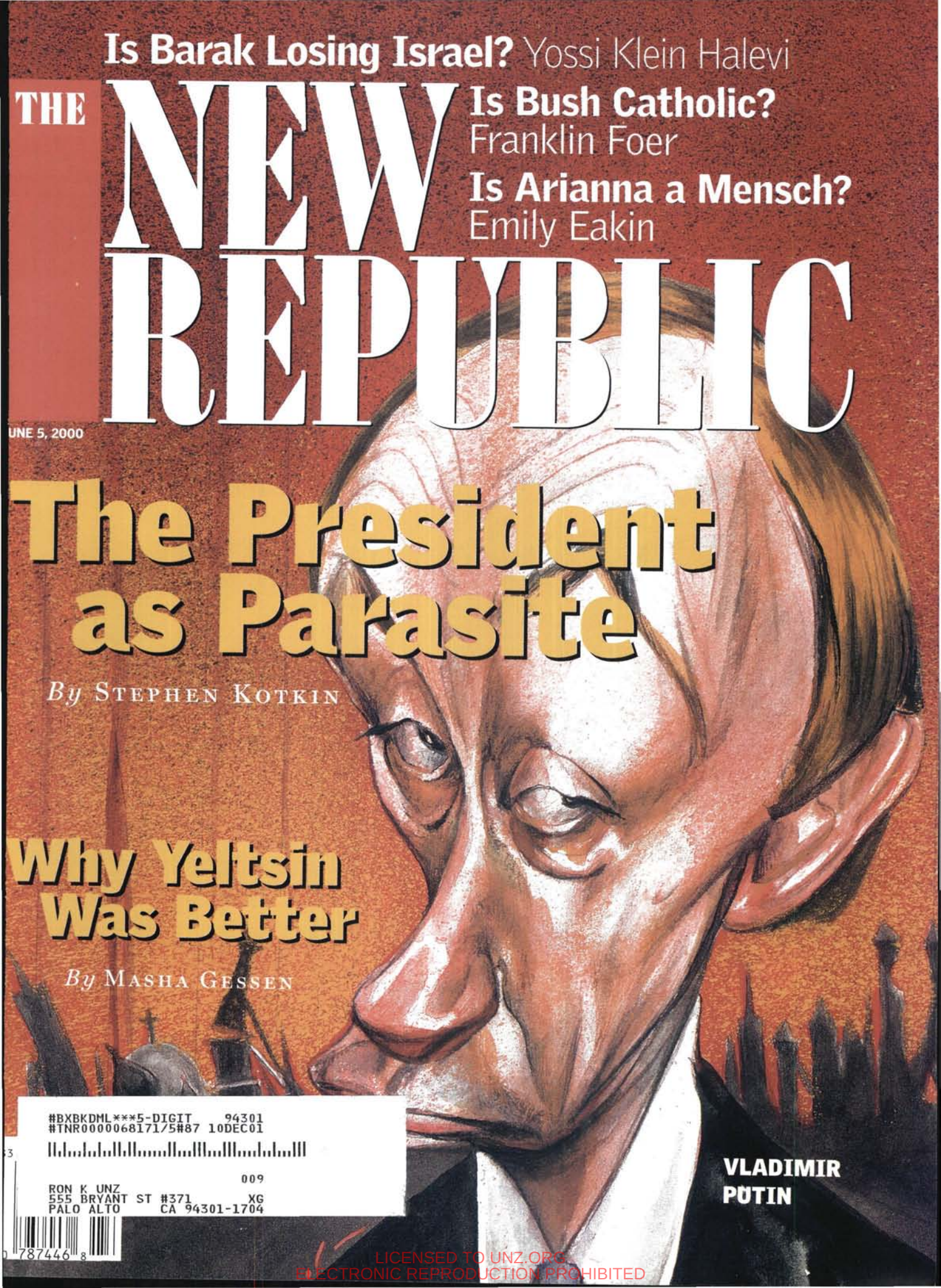
Is Arianna a Mensch? Emily Eakin

The President as Parasite

By Stephen Kotkin

Why Yeltsin Was Better

By Masha Gessen



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CORRESPONDENCE

Propaganda by the deed

TO THE EDITORS:

After having had a polite, intelligent discussion with Franklin Foer, I was dismayed to see him publish such a misinformed, ideologically driven essay as "Protest Too Much" (May 1), which includes a wild mischaracterization of me as the violent anarchist "Roadrunner Crazy Kravitz." First of all, my last name is "Krazykatovitch." "Krazykat" is the name of a character from a turn-of-the-century George Herriman comic; "ovitch" is the Russian suffix for "son of." Additionally, Foer said I was wearing a "puke-green blazer." In fact, I generally wear only the primary color red and its secondaries, purple and orange. My blazer is orange, which I suppose could be construed as pukey. Most disturbingly, though, Foer quotes me as bragging: "You know why I'm here. I plan on doin' some damage." I most certainly made no such remark, and I truly doubt that any of my allies would have said such a bland and stupid thing, except perhaps to mock a reporter asking dumb questions.

Like my compatriots in the Black Bloc, I feel no moral qualms about destroying private property in an intelligent manner; for example, by targeting notorious corporate exploiters such as Starbucks, the Gap, and Nike. Indeed, I would more fully embrace the tactics of Alexander Berkman's "propaganda by the deed" than sacrifice my body to the authorities for arrest in a nonviolent demonstration. But I did not come to Washington, D.C., to smash things up. After having seen the police inflict violence against my fellow protesters in Seattle—the real, inhuman violence of beatings, rubber bullets, tear gas, and pepper spray—I trained to work as a street medic in D.C. And, as a squatter, I liberated unused private and public properties by opening them up as housing.

Not only does Foer misrepresent my own involvement in the D.C. protests, he misunderstands the ideological background of the protesters and demonstrates his ignorance of the intellectual genealogy of contemporary anarchism. He correctly notes that most activists have grown tired of the totalizing, totalitarian thought of most mainstream Marxist parties. Indeed, one of contemporary activism's greatest strengths is its ability to draw on the work of a wide variety of thinkers, including classical anarchists such as Proudhon and Kropotkin and contemporary anarchists such as Noam Chomsky. Foer does mention that Art and Revolution activist David Solnit was influenced by the Italian

Thank Goodness the Market Crashed JAMES CRAMER
Apologies for Miranda JEFFREY ROSEN
Apologists for Kofi Annan DAVID RIEFF
THE NEW REPUBLIC
Does the New New Left Have a Brain?
FRANKLIN FOER
THE EDITORS
MORE WORLD LESS BANK!
portable drinking mug (causes styrofoam kills!)
cargo pants (paint splattered as evidence of manual labor)
Nikes (oops!)
TRB:
Fouad Ajami

Marxist Antonio Gramsci, a thinker whose works are certainly not written for "dummies." Lastly, my own work as a member of WASTE (We Aliens Squat the Earth) has been influenced by Emmanuel Levinas.

Not only does Foer ignore the theoretical underpinning of contemporary anarchism, but he generally misunderstands and misrepresents its tactics. He does not grasp that Solnit's poster of an ear of corn saying RESIST is a protest against the genetic modification of food. On the union front, Foer ignores the recent alliances between labor and environmentalists, the reemergence of the International Workers of the World, and unions such as the Longshoremen's Union, which shut down all of the ports on the West Coast during the Seattle protests. Most significantly, though, Foer wrongly claims that activists have adapted the consumerist focus on pleasure for their own ends. In fact, the revolutionary potential of pleasure has been contemplated since at least the eighteenth-century works of the utopian socialist Charles Fourier. This notion has most famously been embodied in the statement of 1920s anarchist Emma Goldman, "If I cannot dance, I want no part in your revolution."

I cannot tell whether Foer is an ideologue or simply a bad reporter, but I found it unfortunate that he chose to write such an inaccurate, poorly researched essay. Luckily, truthful accounts of both the D.C. protests and my own activities have been published elsewhere. Check out the truth. Liberate your minds.

ROADRUNNER KRAZYKATOVITCH
Via the Internet

TO THE EDITORS:

Franklin Foer's reflections on the "stupid" new movement against corporate globalization made me wonder if he and I attended the same protests on April 16. Nobody handing out reading material except the International Socialist Organization? At the Ellipse I collected such material from at least 15 leftist groups. Young people who reject intellectual discourse and techniques of moral persuasion out of a quest for pure rebellion? A movement excessively committed to "fun" and so steeped in moral relativism that it cannot condemn violence? I spoke with numerous protesters who were remarkably well-read on complex issues of capitalist globalism and steeped in left-pacifist methods. Their leadership preached consistently against violence. A movement so excessively hostile to ideology, alternatives, and progressive government action as to be, "well, stupid"? I met smart, radically democratic kids who have no patience for the ideological infighting and hyperintellectualization of the historical and academic left. They do not want to see differences over competing visions of the good society interfere with united action (including action through the state) against the mugging of the planet by the existing system of corporate capitalism.

Finally, Foer's claim that *Z* magazine provides "advice about protest tactics" but "not intellectual ruminations" could be made only by someone ignorant of *Z*'s content.

PAUL STREET
Social Science Research Institute
Northern Illinois University
DeKalb, Illinois

TO THE EDITORS:

Franklin Foer's attempt to discredit the Mobilization for Global Justice protesters by casting them as anarchists was insulting and transparent. The group profiled in Foer's article is not an anarchist movement. It is a loosely connected group of individuals working together to address social and economic injustices on a global level. Foer made statements about the "anarchist protesters" and in the next sentence applied those statements to the entire movement in a blatant non sequitur. His selection of quotes from protest slogans demonstrates that he ignored the incredibly diverse, pointed, and creative methods the activists used to get their message across, as can be seen at the Independent Media Center's website (*www.indymedia.org*). His casting of these efforts as "almost entirely meaningless" demonstrates his goal: the discrediting of the movement and, by implication, its criticism of the neoliberalist order.

The many people and groups at the

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protest were each vocalizing about different things. Some of the activists were upset about environmental damage; some, about sweatshops, labor conditions, and the trampling of human rights worldwide; some, about the unaccountability and secretiveness of global policymakers; and some, about the fact that all the harm done is beneficial to wealthy corporations. However, a single underlying element is the animus for all of the protesters: humanitarianism and anger about injustice. Perhaps Foer was confused by the lack of a spokesperson directing focus on a single issue. Or perhaps, like many people, he finds human compassion and injustice easy to overlook when enmeshed with the omnipresent neoliberalist gestalt.

Foer claims that the protesters' "proclivity toward violence" will alienate them from their allies and harm their public image. This violence is a fiction. In Seattle about 20 people (out of more than 20,000) broke the windows of corporate buildings and lit dumpsters on fire. That was vandalism. We were told that it resulted in the beatings, pepper spraying, and tear gassing of the many peaceful protesters by the police. In fact, as FAIR has reported (*www.fair.org*), the Seattle police department admitted that the vandalism *followed* the police's violent attempt to stop the peaceful protesters from expressing their views. The media has perpetuated the lie that the protesters went to Seattle and D.C. looking for violent confrontation.

Foer's assertion that the "New New Left" should censor its "ranks'" beliefs is ludicrous. There is no "New New Left." There is no central authority. The convergence of independent groups was made possible by the rapid and free availability of information on the Internet. Decisions within those groups were made by consensus. I'm sure that if Foer had spoken to more people at the protests he would have been told that the people there more resembled a gathering of anti-neoliberalist collectivist anarcho-syndicalists than simple anarchists. Maybe not, though. Those who care about the harm being done are not interested in splitting ideological hairs or hashing out interdoctrinal squabbles. They would rather put their energy toward doing some good.

ADAM THOMPSON
Via the Internet

TO THE EDITORS:
When the United States went to war, it is doubtful that many of the foot soldiers would have been able to engage in critical policy analysis, even though they were willing to risk their lives in service to their country. The same might be said for the protesters in Seattle and Washington, D.C., whose sense of outrage was not backed by the erudition and critical insights that Franklin Foer sought. What Foer fails to note, though, is that there is considerable learned opposition to the U.S. position with respect to the World Trade Organization and the policies and practices of the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank. Some of this even comes from former employees of these organizations.

At a time when the United States is painfully remembering the lessons of Kent State University, one cannot help wondering if the protesters may not be trying to tell the pen-wielding politicians and bureaucrats the same thing that those who protested the war in Vietnam were telling the soldiers when they put flowers in gun barrels.

TOM P. ABELES
Minneapolis, Minnesota

TO THE EDITORS:
While I believe that the editors' summary of the facts surrounding the IMF/World Bank protests is on target ("March Madness," May 1), it strikes me that Franklin Foer's analysis of the protests' raison d'être misses the real story entirely. The breadth of the demonstrations in Seattle and Washington, D.C., was less a reflection of what the New Left has become than a frustrated outsider's reaction to the old left's inability to get up off its ass.

Displays of anarchy are a sad but understandable consequence of the establishment left's abdication of leadership on the core issues that define it. Foer is clearly pained by the inability of the bandanna-wearing masses to articulate an ideological underpinning for their grievances, but whose fault is that? Short of dusting off Marcuse and Mills, I would be interested in learning where Foer believes those who are dissatisfied with the status quo should turn for principled ideals and leadership. The Democratic Party, now indistinguishable from its Republican colleagues? The universities, which have seamlessly merged with agribusiness, chemical, and high-tech conglomerates? How about Vice President Al Gore, sequestered at the moment with focus-group analysts trying to decide how he should feel about Elián González?

The IMF drew fire because its global policies affect, for good or ill, all of the issues that used to elicit energetic responses from the old left—poverty, social

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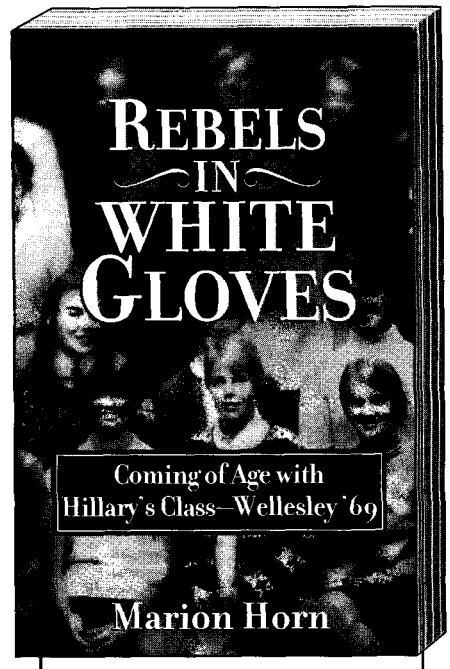

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FROM WASHINGTON

Whatever

A WEEK AGO last Tuesday, the Federal Reserve sent the stock market a message: Calm down, *and this time we really mean it.* For the first time in five years, the central bank's Federal Open Market Committee (FOMC) raised short-term interest rates half a percentage point, rather than the quarter that has become its custom. And, just in case the market didn't get the point, the governors warned that if it and its big brother, the U.S. economy, didn't start behaving, next time they were *really* going to get it.

Replied the market: Big deal. After a passing attack of early-morning willies, all the indexes—Dow, NASDAQ, S&P 500—moved up nicely, continuing a rally begun a couple of days earlier in anticipation of the Fed's move.

In theory, of course, stocks aren't supposed to like higher borrowing costs, which pinch the pocketbooks of consumers and firms and make bonds and other fixed-return investments relatively more attractive. Yet, in recent years, financial markets have countered almost every move by Alan Greenspan and his cohorts to dampen their enthusiasm. How to explain it—masochism? Not at all. Try postmodernism.

Ours is the age of irony, or at least that's the pose. We wallow in unexpected disruptions in the chain of causality and applaud the overturning of conventional logic. How delicious it is when a president's wife, massively humiliated and forced to assume the Tammy Wynette role she once disdained, is not scorned but embraced by the public. How delightful when her opponent, a pontificating New York City mayor, his bid for the Senate crippled by cancer and revelations of philandering, finds himself rising in the polls even as he decides to bow out. How whimsical are those commercials poking fun at the ad business. How satisfying to read a popular financial e-pundit telling *The New Yorker*, "I don't pretend to be a sage. I want to have fun." This, Fortune.com's Andy Serwer told James Collins, "is part of the culture—day trading, pop music, the Internet." Whatever. Jedediah Purdy be damned. Let discontinuity thrive!

Financial irony is inevitable. After all, in what more suitable greenhouse could postmodernism flower than the profitably self-referential stock market? In this agora, the price of what you buy and sell need bear no implacable relationship to any tangibles. While that sounds like good old Viennese subjective valuation, this market doesn't waltz to any theories of market efficiency or rational expectations. What governs today's exchanges, says Yale economist Robert Shiller, is a "psychological feedback loop." Shiller—who actually quizzed traders about their motivations right after the 1987 market crash—argues in his new book, *Irrational Exuberance*, that the implosion had little to do with reported events or economic fundamentals. What fed the panic was . . . panic. Traders watched other traders making for the door and decided they'd better beat them to it.

Similarly, Shiller argues, the stratospheric (often infinite) price-earnings ratios of recent years were fed by word of mouth. Why pore over all that dreary data on growth potential and cash flow when you can just consult your fellows in the herd and clean up?

Shiller, however, has his title wrong. In the postmodern market, irrational exuberance *is* rational. So when Greenspan and his colleagues make their periodic pronouncements, it's easy to picture traders everywhere, whether on an exchange floor or moored to a terminal, going into irony overdrive. "Old Greenspan is still mired in his funny little figures about energy and medical insurance prices," they think. "Wait till he sees what we do now, heh, heh."

Of course, postmoderns pride themselves on their all-knowing sophistication (last October, when the Fed failed to come through with a much-anticipated rate boost, the markets threw a tantrum). But they don't like to be taken for granted. So when the media suggested that the upbeat reaction to the FOMC's Tuesday decision was not surprising, since investors had anticipated the rate increase, these marketeers no doubt wondered whether they had become too predictable. They thought things over—maybe even checked out a few new figures, like the still-another-record trade deficit in March and the leap in industrial production in April—and decided that perhaps the Fed really did mean to continue cracking down. So last Thursday and Friday the stock indexes cut their rally short and headed downward.

This eclecticism may amuse, but it greatly complicates Greenspan's efforts to engineer that elusive soft landing for the high-flying economy. One reason the Fed's five prior rate boosts since last June seem to have had scant effect is that long-term interest rates have been slow to follow the guideline short-term rates the Fed controls. Normally, in good times long-term rates are significantly higher than short-term rates, to offer bondholders better protection against future inflation. But, while rates on credit-card debt and, more recently, mortgages have climbed, long-bond rates have at times actually lagged behind short-term rates—yielding the unusual "inverted yield curve."

One reason for this is the even more unusual phenomenon of the government's running a budget surplus, which means it is buying back long-term Treasury bonds. When bonds of a given maturity become scarcer, their price rises, which means their yield falls. That's just plain old pre-postmodern supply and demand. But a nice postmodern perversity is also at work. Because markets have such faith in Greenspan's ability and determination to keep inflation under control, long-bond buyers aren't demanding the usual insurance premium.

Even global markets seem infected by postmodernism. That gigantic trade deficit America runs with the rest of the world greatly complicates the Fed's calculations. In the textbook world of the past, the trade imbalance should have been erased way back in the 1980s. Foreigners should have grown wary of holding huge quantities of dollars and started dumping them on foreign exchanges. Then the cheapened dollar should have made U.S. exports more attractive to our trading partners while discouraging U.S. consumers from buying so many now-more-expensive imports. But, while foreigners didn't want to buy many U.S. goods or services, they were glad to buy U.S. stocks, bonds, and other assets. That preference kept the dollar (and the trade deficit) high while helping fuel the stock market's takeoff.

Which leads to the final irony. As Greenspan dourly observes from time to time, one factor propelling the economy at a worrisome pace is the "wealth effect" produced by the booming stock market. But, should Greenspan scare the market into a real tumble, foreign investors might lose their taste for U.S. securities and start yanking their money out—forcing the dollar down, pushing up the prices of all those imported goods Americans are hooked on, fueling inflation, and . . . well, you get the picture. A postmodern paradox if ever there was one.

JODIE ALLEN

JODIE ALLEN is a senior writer at *U.S. News & World Report* covering the political economy.

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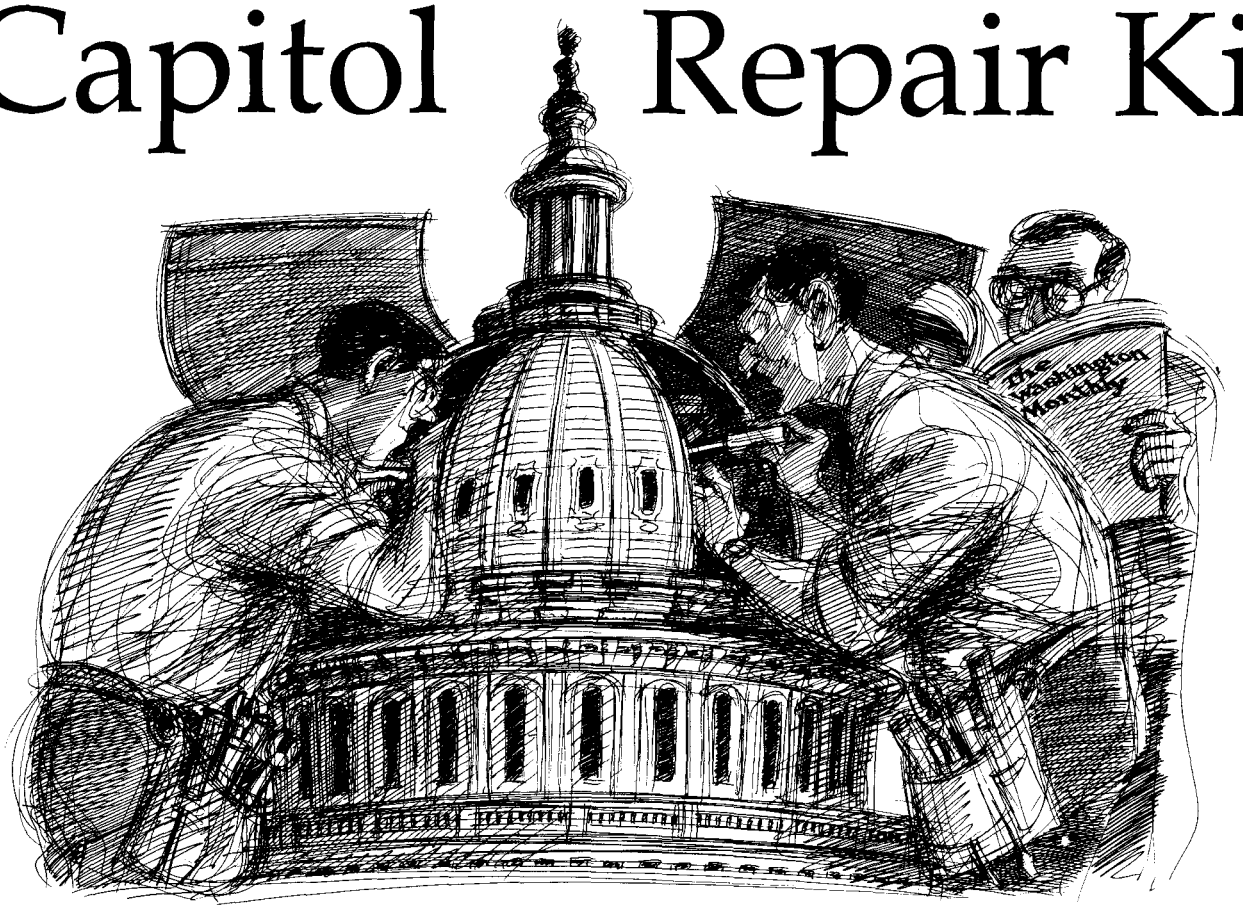

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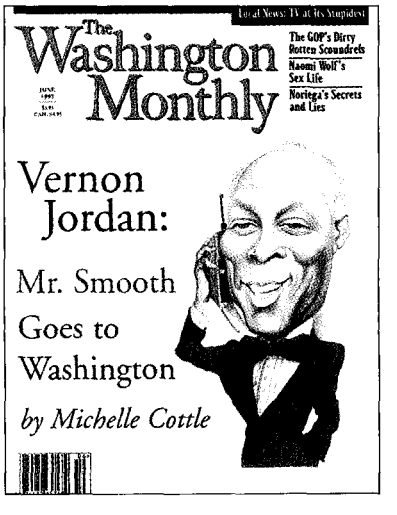

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Prisoner's Dilemma

WHERE'S THAT STIFF upper lip when you need it? Britain made itself the darling of the world's human rights activists in 1998, when the government detained Augusto Pinochet while it considered extraditing him to face trial in Spain. Prime Minister Tony Blair's government, in particular Foreign Secretary Robin Cook, said it wanted an ethical foreign policy—which was a nice contrast with Margaret Thatcher, who had tea with Pinochet just before his bust. Even though the British ultimately pronounced the general in insufficient health to stand trial, Blair's government positioned itself as not just hip but boldly idealistic.

But now that the British have Foday Sankoh, whose idea of politics is hacking off limbs throughout Sierra Leone, London's silence is deafening. Like Pinochet, Sankoh was, at least briefly, in British hands. It was British special forces that helped rescue him, naked and wounded, from a (justifiably) furious crowd in Freetown, Sierra Leone's capital. The British Foreign Office has made a point of insisting that there was a Sierra Leonean police presence throughout, so Blair's government can maintain the fib that Sankoh remains that country's legal and political problem. "It's now a matter for the Sierra Leone government and the U.N. to decide what should happen to him," cringed Blair's spokesman. Translation: We're not going to bring him to justice. When asked in the House of Commons whether Sankoh would face trial, Blair ducked and weaved.

Just like Pinochet, Sankoh has tried to buy himself impunity not with remorse but with threats. Pinochet implicitly conditioned Chile's return to democracy on amnesty for himself and his goons, betting that Chile's democrats wouldn't endanger a peaceful transition by antagonizing the military. For his part, Sankoh last July used the looming menace of his Revolutionary United Front (RUF) to buy himself a place in the government of Ahmad Tejan Kabbah rather than one in jail, which was where he'd been until then—and where he ought to be again.

In Pinochet's case, outside power was the only thing capable of making the difference between impunity and justice. So too for Sankoh. Without foreign assistance in organizing a trial and protecting his government from RUF retaliation, Kabbah may well strike another deal with the mass murderer. Convincing him to send Sankoh to trial would be easier if there were an international tribunal that could indict the rebel leader. But, thanks in large part to the rock-headed opposition of Senator Jesse Helms, the United Nations' proposed permanent international criminal court remains a faint hope. Still, there are options. Under the legal principle of universal jurisdiction, Sankoh could face trial in any country that has its own laws regarding torture and crimes against humanity or has signed international covenants against these offenses. One such country: Britain. Or the United Kingdom could extradite Sankoh to an African country with a reliable judiciary, such as South Africa.

So why is Blair's government so reluctant? It could hardly be cowed by the RUF. Or could it? Bringing Sankoh to trial risks dragging Britain—which has a sizable military presence in Sierra Leone—further into the country's politics. It also poses a risk to some 250 U.N. peacekeepers still being held, somewhere, by the RUF. The rebels have also captured a British citizen: Major Andy Harrison, a U.N. military observer reportedly trapped in eastern Sierra Leone. This has an awfully familiar ring to it. In Bosnia, the Serb ultras became geniuses at playing on the United Nations' dread of casualties, taking U.N. troops hostage to block NATO air strikes in 1995 and to cow the United Nations during the Srebrenica massacre. And yet, after all that, today's top Western priority is, once again, the protection of U.N. hostages. Sankoh seems to have learned the lesson Ratko Mladic gleaned from his dealings with John Major, Blair's hapless Tory predecessor: Justice is not worth British lives.

It is one thing for Kabbah to be tempted by accommodation; after all, the threat of war-crimes prosecution gives the RUF fanatics no incentive to lay down their weapons and turn to normal politics. But it is another thing altogether for the West to be coerced out of doing what it knows is right because the United Nations' professional soldiers might be put at risk. If Kabbah tells Cook and Blair he wants Sankoh to be tried, it would be unconscionable to betray that wish. The RUF may respond with another bloodthirsty spasm, but it could be easily handled by a show of British force. Britain says it is a great power. It is time for it to act like one. ■

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N O T E B O O K

BORDER WARS: Eighty-seven-year-old David Brower, an ecologist and the first director of the Sierra Club, quit the organization's board of directors last week, charging the club with not being strident enough. The final straw was the board's refusal to call for immigration barriers. Since 1996, the board has maintained a "no position" stance on U.S. immigration policy. For its failure to demand closed borders, the Sierra Club has been denounced by many of environmentalism's leading doomsayers, including Lester Brown, Herman Daly, Norman Myers, former Senator Gaylord Nelson, and Harvard University's E.O. Wilson. On resigning, Brower declared, "Overpopulation is perhaps the biggest problem facing us, and immigration is part of that problem. It has to be addressed." But how, exactly, would restricting immigration help stabilize the global population? According to an array of demographic studies, when residents of the developing world move to the United States or Western Europe, their family size and rates of fertility *decline*, compared with rates in their home societies. This makes intuitive sense when you consider that, upon immigrating to the developing world, women acquire greater freedom and economic power, and economic incentives encouraging large families diminish. If immigration to the United States were barred, then more people in the developing world would have more children, increasing global population. U.S. immigration policy may be good or bad for American society, but it clearly slows overall population growth. We salute the Sierra Club for its commonsense statement, "Restrictive immigration quotas will not end the human-rights abuses that drive millions around the world from their homes." Brower, who built his career on an odd combination of substantive action (especially California land protection) and tiresome grandstanding, has long been fond of saying, "In any negotiation, my goal is to be the most unreasonable person in the room." In this instance, he certainly achieved his goal.

MISSION CREEP: The Christian right deserves credit for drawing attention to the denial of religious freedom in countries like China. But it's not always the best advocate of the cause. The problem is that the Christian right is, well, a Christian movement. And it's closely linked to missionary organizations. So it's not always clear whether it wants to promote the freedom to practice Christianity or Christianity itself—or whether it can tell the difference. House Majority Whip Tom DeLay, at least, seems to be having some trouble. Explaining to "Hardball" host Chris Matthews last week why he believes "trade is freedom," DeLay remarked, "I mean, there are a lot of Chinese nationals that have become Christians because they're working for American companies." That's perfectly fine, but perhaps someone should tell DeLay (a close ally of the Christian right) that converting people from one religion to another is not a legitimate goal of U.S. foreign policy.

Our Neighbor to the North

BORDER STORIES

U.S. TO MONITOR CANADIAN CROSSINGS WITH CAMERAS

By Robert Russo

WASHINGTON • The United States will train high-resolution day and night cameras on its border with Canada following the foiling of a terrorist plot to detonate bombs in the United States on New Year's Eve, Bill Clinton said yesterday.

The U.S. President announced a package of high-technology security measures yesterday while providing new details on the charges against Ahmed Ressam, an Algerian native who worked in a convenience store in Montreal.

The Algerian native was part of a terrorist conspiracy organized by Osama bin Laden to detonate the bombs in the United States, Mr. Clinton told Coast Guard graduates in New London, Conn.

See CLINTON on Page A16

REUTERS

On guard for thee.

Canada to monitor U.S. crossings with chickens

By Richard Foot

Canada's newest border guards will not mind a bit if you call them chicken -- because that is what they are.

Hundreds of common hens are being enlisted by the federal government to carry out sentry duty on the border with the United States.

—*National Post* (Toronto), May 18

(Thanks to Craig Hamilton of Toronto.)

UNION DUES: America's teachers' unions swear they are not obstructing school reform to protect the jobs of bad teachers. An ongoing battle in Massachusetts, ground zero in the teacher-testing war, suggests otherwise. This week, in response to strong lobbying by Republican Governor Paul Cellucci, the state Board of Education approved a proposal to test teachers in low-performing schools for basic competency. Under the initiative, in any school where more than 30 percent of students fail the math portion of the statewide test (called the MCAS), the math teachers must themselves be tested for basic math ability—making Massachusetts the first state to impose such an accountability standard. The plan is not draconian: results would be kept private, schools with large numbers of special-education students would receive special allowances, and education-department officials pledge there would be no punishment for teachers who fail—merely a further evaluation to determine whether some remedial training might be in order. Still, both the Massachusetts Federation of Teachers and the Massachusetts Teachers Association (members, respectively, of the American Federation of Teachers and the National Education Association) are threatening a lawsuit against the proposal, which they told *The Boston Globe* was "demeaning," "insulting," and, most relevantly, unconstitutional—because, they say, only the legislature can impose such a test. Constitutional questions aside, the unions' arguments about the plan itself are baffling, even by teachers'-union standards. They complain that because only teachers in low-performing schools would be tested, the initiative singles out poor, urban districts. Yet last year, when Cellucci proposed testing all teachers, the unions fought that, too—and won. The unions complain that judging teacher competency is no way to measure the quality

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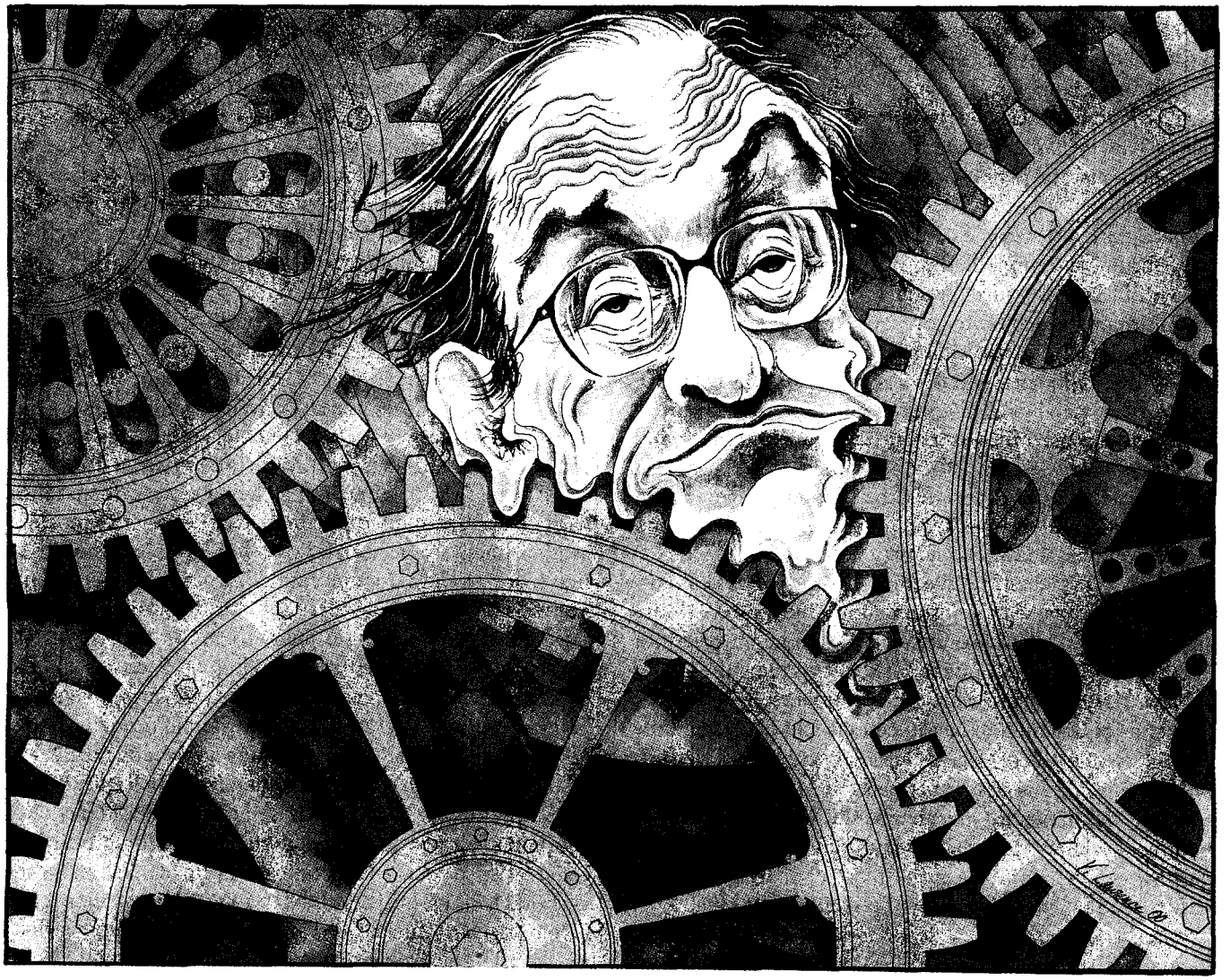
of schools. But they also oppose using the MCAS to test students. Besides, Massachusetts already tests prospective teachers—but not veteran ones. No doubt the unions are correct in pointing out that other factors—like overcrowded classrooms, poor facilities, a general shortage of teachers, and socioeconomic factors beyond teachers' control—may have as much or more to do with students' poor performance as teacher quality does. And Cellucci—whose own abilities to pass any test of intellectual skill should not be taken for granted—has been far less enthusiastic about attacking these problems. But viewing additional funding and stricter standards as mutually exclusive is politically self-defeating and morally indefensible—in fact, it's precisely the reason teachers' unions have lost their moral authority in the American education debate. It is an absolute scandal that last year more than 60 percent of Massachusetts's prospective teachers failed their competency exams in math, and it suggests that many veterans would, too. Which is probably why the unions are fighting so hard to ensure those tests never take place.

PRIMARY SOURCES: *The Hotline*, a daily compendium of political news gathered from newspapers, magazines, websites, and TV programs, is a sort of Cliffs Notes for campaign journalists. But, just like in college English class, it's dangerous to read it without also reading the original. Thus, when we read in *The Hotline* that the *Houston Chronicle* had reported that George W. Bush said his Social Security plan "could be the first step toward a complete privatization," we should have checked the *Chronicle* before using the quote ("Bold Over," by Jonathan Chait, May 29). It turns out the words in quotation marks were not Bush's but rather the *Chronicle*'s characterization of Bush's remarks. (We should have been tipped off by the succinctness of the quote—not exactly a hallmark of W.'s speaking style.) What Bush actually said was: "You're asking if it's possible to go from one regime to another overnight, and the answer is 'No.' . . . It's going to take awhile to transition to a system where personal savings accounts are the predominant part of the investment vehicle. . . . This is a step toward a completely different world, and an important step." We regret the error. ■

VINT'S WEEK



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Campaign Journal

Payback

By MICHELLE COTTLE

NEWARK, NEW JERSEY

"I HOPE YOU'RE Christian!" New Jersey Senate candidate Jon Corzine shouted in my ear, straining to make himself heard above the music. Under the circumstances, it was clear what he meant: We had just settled into the front pew of the Fellowship Missionary Baptist Church in downtown Newark for the congregation's annual Founders' Day celebration, and the choir was gearing up for what proved to be nearly a three-hour service. Still, Corzine's quip brought to mind the recent uproar over whether this guy is just too politically cloddish to win a seat in the Senate. (Most notably, there was his unfortunate crack about an Italian-American contractor's making "cement shoes" for a living.)

His perceived lack of political savvy notwithstanding, Corzine had a staunch supporter in Fellowship's pastor, the Reverend E.T. Byrd. "If you didn't know [Corzine] before, you should know him now," the gloriously rotund minister told the 300 or so souls in attendance, "because his commercials have been burning up the airwaves." And the ads, Byrd assured his flock, clearly show "that he is the best candidate. That he has the concerns of all the people dear to his heart—not just the people in the suburbs, but the people in the city, too."

That's funny. Because earlier that morning, at a "candidates' forum" at Temple Beth O'r in the upper-middle-class enclave of Clark, Corzine's opponent in the Democratic primary, former Garden State governor and eight-term representative Jim Florio, had charged that Corzine's ubiquitous TV ads (and billboards and fliers and bus ads and ...) prove that the former co-chairman of Goldman Sachs, who has never held elective office, is a political know-nothing trying to buy the race with his $300 million fortune. "There is a point," a visibly irked Florio told the 50-odd listeners noshing on bagels and orange juice, "at which elections are no longer elections; they become auctions."

Though more than a little biased, Florio has a point: Corzine's candidacy is a testament to the power of the almighty dollar. A political unknown when he jumped into the race early last year, Corzine set about winning the hearts of New Jersey's Democratic power brokers by dumping thousands of dollars into local elections and party committees. As Byrd testified, Corzine has blanketed the state with TV ads, running his first spots back in March. (Florio, by contrast, couldn't afford any airtime until two weeks before the June 6 primary.) As of mid-May, Corzine had sunk more than $15 million into the race—most of it from his own pocket—and his spending showed no signs of slowing.

At the same time as he has been spending like mad, Corzine has studiously avoided forums where his potential handicaps—his lack of government experience, his unpolished oratory skills, and his lefty policy proposals, such as universal health care, universal preschool, and abolition of the death penalty—might overshadow the professionally packaged image voters see on their televisions each night. Corzine has refused to debate Florio except under carefully controlled conditions. He declined an invitation from the League of Women Voters to take part in a May 26 event to be carried on the region's ABC affiliates. Of the four debates to which he did agree, two were broadcast on local cable channels with limited saturation, and a third aired on a New York radio station with a small Jersey listenership.

Corzine has also shunned joint appearances. Rather than participate in the candidates' forum in Clark, he opted to attend early services at a church in Trenton. A local councilwoman served as his surrogate, and campaign co-chairman Steve Goldstein was on-site to work the crowd. ("Forget politics, that is a great coat," Goldstein cooed to one matron in a funky rain slicker.) Corzine's unwillingness to occupy the same room as Florio became such an issue that editors from the Gannett newspaper chain, which owns seven papers in New Jersey, reportedly set up an ambush. On May 18 they invited Corzine to chat with members of the Gannett editorial board. They also invited Florio. Only upon arrival did the candidates learn that they were expected to stage an impromptu debate.

Despite the occasional setback, Corzine's stay-away strategy seems to be working. Trailing in the polls by more than 30 points back in February, he is now running virtually even with or ahead of the former governor in most surveys. One state strategist reports that, as of early May, "the edge has shifted" in Corzine's favor. All this could change, of course, when Florio finally puts his own ads on the air. But it increasingly looks as though, come June 6, Corzine may effectively buy himself the Democratic Senate nomination.

AND THAT'S PROBABLY a good thing—because Corzine is his party's only hope of hanging on to retiring Senator Frank Lautenberg's seat. Conventional wisdom considers Florio unelectable, and, in this instance, conventional wisdom is right. With the primaries drawing to a close, the former governor has failed to shed the political baggage that prompted northern New Jersey's Democratic establishment to adopt an "anyone but Florio" attitude in the first place. "I am a Corzine supporter because he is not Jim Florio," says Democratic State Senator Raymond J. Lesniak, a leader of the anti-Florio push. In 1990, his first year as governor, Florio enacted a $2.8 billion tax increase and has been politically radioactive ever since. His favorable rating hovers around 40 percent (his unfavorable rating is almost identical), and even before Corzine's attack ads hit the airwaves, he was unable to crack 40 percent in polls pitting him against any of the little-known Republican candidates.

And it's not just the voters. Florio has still not been forgiven by many local Democratic pols who blame him for the electoral beating the party took in 1991. "We lost almost half of our elected officials," recalls Lesniak. "We still haven't recovered." The problem, he insists, extends beyond Florio's

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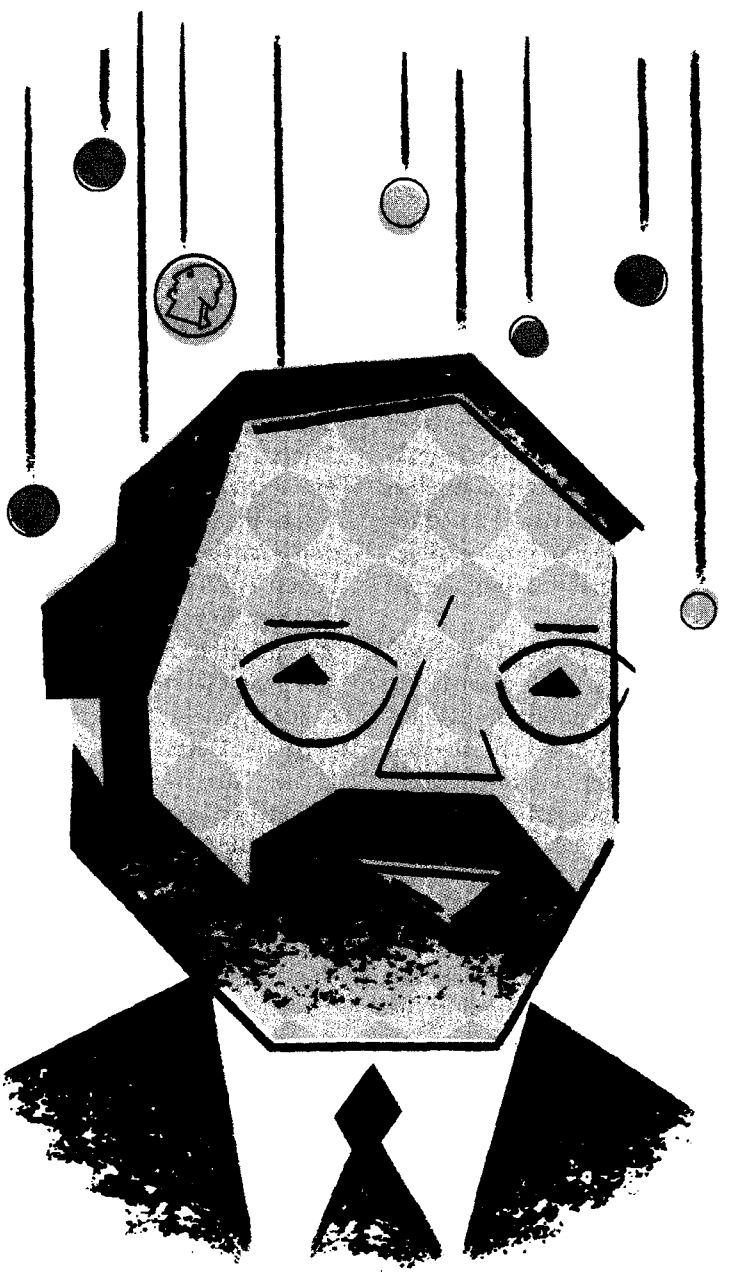
tax hike. "It was a failed administration. Disaster struck everywhere. Fees and auto-insurance rates went through the roof. Even though he provided more money for the education system, the education system got worse. People lost health care insurance." Since Florio was voted out of office in 1993, says Lesniak, the party has slowly been regaining ground. "Next year we're primed to win the governorship and both houses of the legislature, and a lot of people are very concerned that a Florio candidacy will set that back."

Strangely, seven years after his political Waterloo and well over a year into his Senate campaign, Florio doesn't have a convincing answer about how he plans to overcome his baggage and win in November. Asked about this at the candidates' forum, the former governor first reminded the audience of how close he came to defeating Christie Todd Whitman in 1993 and then explained that he had been forced to take tough steps to correct a budget crisis inherited from his predecessors. It was the responsible thing to do, he said. New Jersey is required to maintain a balanced budget, and he had not wanted to be the governor "of a deadbeat state."

Again, Florio has a point. But lecturing voters on how irresponsible they were to oust him from office is perhaps not the best way to win friends and influence people. And, unsurprisingly, many Democratic leaders are unwilling to gamble on a "Time heals all wounds" strategy, especially with New Jersey Republicans gearing up to make sure voters neither forgive nor forget Florio's past. Already, two GOP candidates (not to mention Corzine) are running ads invoking the unpleasantness of the Florio years and claiming that each man is the most anti-Florio dog in the race. Even Gore strategists are voicing concern that Florio, if nominated, could harm their candidate's fortunes in this swing state. As one strategist close to the Gore campaign put it, "He's the Typhoid Mary of New Jersey politics."



STEVEN SAVAGE

Of course, once Florio is safely out of the picture, Democrats may find Corzine something of a tough general-election sell himself. Although Lesniak and other Corzine boosters insist their man has his finger on the pulse of New Jersey, other Dems admit concern that he is too liberal for the state's moderate electorate. Republicans are also likely to latch onto questions Florio has raised about some of the investment strategies Goldman Sachs pursued during Corzine's tenure—benefiting gun companies, asbestos manufacturers, and the Sudanese government, as Florio tells it—as well as the fact that Corzine has refused to release his income tax returns. And, while Florio may not have the funds to properly pillory Corzine for his past and his recent foot-in-mouth episodes, you can bet Senator Mitch McConnell and the National Republican Senatorial Committee do.

Still, if Corzine is a mediocre Senate candidate, at least he's a well-funded mediocre Senate candidate. And the value of his unprecedented ad blitz was clear during a Sunday afternoon meet-and-greet session with the candidate outside the Pathmark supermarket in Irvington. "Hey! I saw you on TV!" a middle-aged man enthused, hurrying over to shake the candidate's hand. "There he is—Big Jon!" bellowed a young guy sporting baggy pants and a stocking cap. After a handful of similar reactions, I asked Devin Dangler, a Corzine family friend who's taking a break from investment banking to help out with the primary, if people on the street commonly recognize Corzine from his commercials. Absolutely, said Dangler. "When we're driving around, people will nearly run off the road staring at him." Just as long as they don't try to engage him in a debate. ■

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Jerusalem Dispatch

End of the Affair

By Yossi Klein Halevi

Israeli goodwill gestures are reciprocated with Palestinian bullets. The Israeli army withdraws from Lebanon as Hezbollah shoots at its back. Our Southern Lebanese Army (SLA) allies are rounded up for summary trial while residents of the Galilee flee into air-raid shelters before rumors of impending Katyusha attacks. I am beginning to feel my country unraveling.

I am that elusive political being whose mood Israeli pollsters are constantly trying to measure: the swing voter. In 1992, after serving as a reservist in Gaza refugee camps and experiencing the fulfillment of the left's worst prophesies, I voted for Yitzhak Rabin, to end the occupation and try to make peace. In 1996, after Palestinian suicide bombings validated the right's most dire warnings, I voted for Benjamin Netanyahu, to tell Yasir Arafat that if he didn't stop Hamas and abandon his bilingual game of speaking peace in English and holy war in Arabic, the deal was over. And I voted for Ehud Barak in 1999 because he promised to be a combination of Rabin and Netanyahu: ready for painful compromise but nobody's fool.

Barak seemed to understand that the only way to reassure Israelis like me was to link concessions with resolve. He sensed how much compromise the Israeli public could tolerate, and he empathized with its fears. And he became the first prime minister to embody a national consensus on the territories: creation of a Palestinian state on most of the West Bank, with blocs of settlements and a united Jerusalem still under exclusive Israeli rule.

But Barak began to lose me on May 15, when he forced a reluctant Knesset to cede Abu Dis and two other villages physically contiguous with Jerusalem even as Palestinian police shot at Israeli soldiers. Instead of suspending the Knesset debate until Arafat restored calm, Barak minimized Arafat's accountability, accepting the media cliché that the chairman had "lost control of the street." That claim was about as credible as Shimon Peres's attempt to absolve Arafat of responsibility for failing to control Hamas in 1996. In fact, Arafat had "control of the street" all along; while the gun battles near Ramallah raged, the Palestinian chairman sat in his headquarters, 800 meters away.

The worst Palestinian violence in nearly four years broke out just as final-status talks began. And that confluence uncannily recalled the sudden rise in Hezbollah attacks in Lebanon that accompanied Syrian-Israeli talks over the Golan Heights last winter. In both cases, the violence couldn't be blamed on the "enemies of peace" trying to sabotage a deal: Hezbollah is controlled by Syria, and last week's intifada was ordered by Arafat. Like Syrian President Hafez al-Assad, Arafat apparently believes violence can prod the negotiations along by reminding Israelis of the price of rejecting Arab demands. And so, by offering a goodwill gesture under fire, Barak has ensured that the violence will continue.

Israeli commentators on the Middle East have recently warned of a new and dangerous doctrine, based on a perception of Israeli defeatism, that is spreading in the Arab world. After the Camp David accords and, especially, the Oslo agreement, Arab leaders seemed to be gradually adopting the Egyptian argument that the way to win territorial concessions from Israel was to sign peace agreements with it. Now that is losing ground to a renewed "Hezbollah doctrine," especially among Palestinians: The way to get the Israelis out of occupied territory is to force them out.

If that is indeed becoming accepted wisdom in the Arab world, Barak's shabby Lebanon withdrawal will bring war much closer. Government representatives and left-wing analysts reassure us that there are no painless withdrawals, that even the United States fled Saigon in humiliation. The problem is that my Saigon isn't thousands of miles away—it's on the border. Hezbollah, the front line of what remains of the Iranian revolution, is now peering into the kibbutz houses of Manara and Misgav Am.

Like the Knesset vote on Abu Dis, the humiliation of Lebanon was a question of timing. Yes, we had to withdraw, but not before ensuring the most minimal arrangements for our northern towns and farms and, especially, for our SLA allies. Watching the televised scenes of SLA men driven away bound and bent, I felt that we don't deserve allies. They fought with us for two decades because they believed that, compared to Syria and Hezbollah, we were the good side. A neighbor said to me, "Now we must go in and rescue these people." I was touched by her naïveté—she was thinking as though she still lived in the Israel of Entebbe. The capitulation that began with Abu Dis and culminated in southern Lebanon is a deeper tragedy than the tactical loss of Israeli deterrence: it is the undoing of the Israeli ethos. Israel was to be the final shore, an end to running. But now we've begun to run again.

It is in this climate that we are proceeding toward a possible settlement with the Palestinians. According to Israeli press reports, Barak's negotiators in the final-status talks in Stockholm presented the furthest-reaching concessions ever offered by an Israeli government, starting with eventual control of about 90 percent of the territories, including most of the strategic Jordan Valley and dozens of settlements, like the town of Kiryat Arba near Hebron. As for Jerusalem, an "interim" arrangement would grant Palestinians civil control over their neighborhoods and allow them to form a "civil guard." That would mean an armed Palestinian presence in a city whose final status was unresolved—an almost certain formula for turning Jerusalem into the next battlefield.

Under the best circumstances, Barak would have a hard time selling me that deal. And, if the pattern of Arab violence and Israeli retreat persists, I will vote against any agreement accompanied by blackmail. I don't think I'm in

Yossi Klein Halevi, a senior writer at *The Jerusalem Report*, is writing a book about the three religions in the Holy Land.

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the minority. Assad's pressure tactics, after all, only hardened Israeli skepticism about a Golan withdrawal; the same is now happening on the Palestinian front.

Remarkably, even some dogmatic doves are having second thoughts. Here is Doron Rosenblum, one of Israel's most acerbic left-wing columnists, writing recently in the newspaper *Ha'aretz*: "If we can't get a handshake from the Syrians, perhaps some slight glance of interest in exchange for our willingness to relinquish all of the Golan; if not a nod of approval from Lebanon for our complete withdrawal from its territory, then at least no claims from them for parts of the Galilee; if not warm peace and friendship with Egypt, then at least not a flagrant anti-Israel policy; if not Palestinian restraint from shooting precisely on the day when we decide to return Abu Dis, then perhaps at least just shooting into the air or merely aiming at soldiers' legs—and not at their heads."

I don't want to give up on Barak. His intelligence and courage and ability to embody the Israeli experience are unrivaled among our increasingly mediocre politicians. But if the only peace he can offer is humiliation, I'll search for another leader. With each new Israeli defeat, the right begins to look like an air-raid shelter again: ugly and claustrophobic, but dependable. ■

London Dispatch

London Calling

By Peter Bergen

Walthamstow, a neighborhood in deep decay, is far removed from the newly hip lofts and galleries springing up in other parts of London's East End. But then I wasn't there to see works by Gilbert and George or Jenny Saville. I had come to attend a conference titled "Osama bin Laden and Terrorism," organized by one Sheik Omar Bakri Muhammad, who has emerged as the most flamboyant of the Islamist militants who now call London home.

I grew up in London, but I quickly got lost wandering the dismal streets of E.17 on a disconcertingly balmy April evening. I knew I was getting closer when I saw banners on the street declaiming jihad against the pirate state of israel. The meeting was in a nondescript community hall. Inside was a group of men prostrating themselves in prayer. The hard core went for a military-chic look. Some wore kaffiyehs and combat jackets; others, the dun woolen hat of the Afghan mountains that marks them as participants, would-be or otherwise, in that country's holy war against communism. A few sported the photographer's vest affected by network correspondents when they want to signal that they are in a war zone. But most of the audience was dressed in the nondescript fashion of students, cabbies, and small-business owners. I counted about 250 men at the meeting and, surprisingly, more than 100 women, a few completely covered but most simply wearing headscarves. It was a polyglot crowd of Arabs, Africans, and Pakistanis.

As a group of men set up video equipment to screen scenes from Russia's bloody blitzkrieg in Chechnya, a young man showed me pamphlets with titles like "Jihad in America?" On the walls of the hall, posters announced clinton: the most wanted terrorist and jewish occupiers: kill them when you see them. Then a hush fell over the room as Sheik Omar, a charismatic presence with his walking stick and well-pressed black cleric's garb, made his way to the stage. "We are not here to promote Osama bin Laden, though we support him," he began. But, he asked rhetorically, "who is a terrorist? Who defines what is wrong and what is right?" As the audience listened raptly, Sheik Omar continued: "We recognize the leadership of bin Laden, though we have not met with him . . . this man who sacrificed his life for Islam . . . a man who is a multimillionaire."

Next, a well-built young man dressed in a t-shirt and camouflage pants took the mike. He identified himself as director of security for Sheik Omar's organization, explaining in a heavy London accent that combat training in Britain "is in itself not illegal." He then launched into a diatribe against the United States—"It's called the land of the free; tell that to the slaves"—and characterized America's ongoing attacks on Iraq as an "organized act of political terrorism." Later, the security chief escorted me out of the hall and quizzed me about my credentials, observing that spies often pose as journalists. (The only potential spies I could see were two English police officers, trying to look inconspicuous, sitting in a car parked near the meeting.)

The bin laden conference is just a small part of a wider movement that has mushroomed in London in the past decade. Just as Peshawar, Pakistan, became headquarters in the 1980s for a global cast of Islamists attracted by the holy war in neighboring Afghanistan, London has now emerged as home base for various groups of the Islamist Internationale. Some are simply political or media organizations; others advocate direct participation in various jihads around the world. These organizations include Sheik Omar's group, Al-Muhajiroun as well as the Movement for Islamic Reform in Arabia, headed by Saad al-Fagih, a cerebral former surgeon; the Islamic Observation Center, run by Yasser al-Sirri, who faces multiple prison and death sentences in his native Egypt; the Advice and Reformation Committee, set up by Saudi Khaled al-Fauwaz, now in prison for his alleged role in bin Laden's terrorist conspiracies; a cell of Egypt's Islamic Jihad; and the Supporters of Sharia, fronted by Abu Hamza.

Why London? First, there is the long and honorable British tradition of offering asylum to political refugees, from Marx to Kossuth to Trotsky. Then there's the fact that London already has sizable, established Muslim communities where new arrivals can settle comfortably into neighborhoods dotted with *halal* butchers and mosques. And, for some, Britain's notoriously accommodating welfare system is

Peter Bergen, a print and TV journalist based in Washington, D.C., is writing a book about jihad movements.

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even an attraction. Sheik Omar, al-Sirri, and Abu Hamza have all drawn benefits from the system.

ABU HAMZA MAY be the most mediagenic of the Islamists. While defusing a mine in Afghanistan, he lost both arms and an eye, which gives him the sinister look of a James Bond movie villain—an affect little dispelled by his calls for jihad against the enemies of Islam, delivered in sound-bite-ready English. No wonder he is in the Rolodex of every British chat-show booker.

Last year, I visited Abu Hamza in his modern mosque in North London, a stone's throw from the home stadium of the legendary soccer team Arsenal. A bear of a man, Abu Hamza reportedly began his life in London on a note more profane than sacred—as a bouncer at a Soho nightclub. He qualified as an engineer in the mid-'80s and worked in Afghanistan from 1989 to 1993, helping to rebuild the war-shattered country. During the mid-'90s he traveled back and forth between London and central Bosnia to aid Arab mujahideen fighting the Serbs. As three of his followers listened, he urged me to convert to Islam: "The first thing you should do as a researcher is research what happens when you are in the grave," he said. "We are not afraid to die. We know that this life is a prison; our real life is when we see God."

Among serious Arab opposition figures and journalists, Abu Hamza is regarded as a bit of a self-publicizing joke, as he is neither a profound scholar of Islam nor a serious political figure. The same point is made about his friend Sheik Omar, whom a British TV channel dubbed "the Tottenham Ayatollah." But to dismiss these men as mere jokes is naïve—as is shown by the fates of eight Muslim British men sentenced to prison last year in Yemen for their alleged connections to a Yemeni terrorist group that has killed Western tourists. Yemeni jurisprudence is hardly a model of fairness, so the exact story of what the Muslim Brits were doing remains murky. It seems that some may have come to Yemen on a vacation to study Arabic, while others may have visited a known terrorist training camp. But one thing is clear: Members of the group are related to Abu Hamza. His 17-year-old son was sentenced to three years in prison, and his son-in-law, age 18, was sentenced to seven years. The Yemenite authorities accused Abu Hamza of orchestrating the nefarious doings of the British youths and asked for his extradition, a request London turned down.

As for Sheik Omar, he makes no secret of his recruiting efforts for jihad. According to *The Guardian*, he personally convinced three students at London colleges to quit their studies in February to train for foreign holy wars as part of a larger effort to send volunteers to places like Chechnya, Kosovo, and Kashmir.

As a result of such activities, there are signs that Britain's long-standing tolerance for dissenters may be wearing thin. Laws originally aimed at the IRA are increasingly being applied to Muslims. Indeed, Akhtar Raja, an attorney who specializes in representing Muslim organizations and individuals, says the new climate represents a "rerun of the McCarthy-era witch-hunt" directed against "politically minded Muslims." One sign of the change is the hitherto successful U.S. effort to extradite three men with alleged ties to bin Laden's group. Although the case against them rests heavily on the fact that they exchanged faxes with the Saudi-born terrorist's organization—the kind of activity in which a journalist covering bin Laden might engage—rather than of any direct role in terrorism, the British courts have ordered their extradition, and, barring a High Court reversal, they will stand trial in Manhattan.

Still, for every alleged bin Laden associate being extradited, there's a case like that of Mohammed al-Masari, a prominent Saudi dissident whom British authorities, under pressure from the government in Riyadh, tried to expel last year only to be overruled by the British High Court. Militant Islamists are not likely to miss the message: London is still calling. ■

Moscow Dispatch

Beat the Press

By MASHA GESSEN

I WAS DRIVING to an inhumanely early interview one morning a few weeks ago when the radio news announcer suddenly reported that unidentified armed men in uniform had seized the offices of Media Most, Russia's largest media corporation, which owns the weekly magazine where I work. I slowed down briefly: the temptation to go home and back to sleep was great. Still, I reasoned, the radio station I was listening to—the only news station on the FM dial and the only non-governmental news station in the country, aside from U.S.-owned Radio Liberty—also belongs to Media Most, and it was still on the air. That meant my magazine was probably also still in existence, and thus I had to go to the interview.

In the few months since Vladimir Putin came to power, the prospect of a state shutdown of Russia's free press has gone from an impossibility to a probability. For one thing, Putin's view of the media is markedly different from Boris Yeltsin's. The former president, unpredictable as he was, had a few things in which he more or less believed, and freedom of the press was one of them. Yes, journalists who angered the Kremlin were sometimes subjected to selective tax inspections and occasionally were even threatened. Still, the editors-in-chief of Russia's various national media took comfort in the fact that, to Yeltsin, media freedom was a baseline value. A former party functionary, Yeltsin replaced Communist ideology with a supremely simplified vision of democracy, which boiled down to two tenets: He could not abide Communists, and he supported freedom of the press. Even as Yeltsin careened wildly on economic reform, relations with the West, and the war with Chechnya, those principles remained.

MASHA GESSEN is chief correspondent at *Itogi*, the Russian partner to *Newsweek*.

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But Yeltsin's successor is a different animal. Gloriously unburdened by ideology, he shares neither his predecessor's distaste for Communists nor his esteem for the media. The one value he has repeatedly sworn to uphold is "dictatorship of the law," a telling oxymoron. Putin's concept of law, it seems, was shaped by the KGB, where he built his career. His ideal state would function like that agency: closed, hierarchical, and pragmatic—with the media as its compliant propaganda arm.

This would be problematic under the best of circumstances. But it is particularly worrisome because while Yeltsin ensured that his democratic ideals were reflected in Russia's constitution, he did not institutionalize them in the court system. Yeltsin respected freedom of the press, but he did not put in place the institutions necessary to guarantee it after he left office.

Nine years after communism's fall, Russia's court system remains remarkably similar to the Soviet Union's. That system was designed for one purpose: to be the punitive arm of the state. Its central feature was the *procurature*, headed by the prosecutor general, which conducted investigations, represented the state in court, and had the right to review and reverse court decisions. As a result, judges saw their job as carrying out the wishes of the state, as represented by the prosecutor. The prosecutor-judge synergy was also guaranteed by the fact that judges, as a rule, were former investigators. The role of the defense attorney was largely symbolic, since even his access to a detained client was controlled by the *procurature*.

In the early '90s, Russian reformers introduced two new kinds of courts—arbitrage courts, which have jurisdiction over business-related disputes, and the constitutional court, which can review legislation and its application in specific cases. But these new structures ran parallel to the main legal system, where the central problem, domination by the *procurature*, remained. And, time after time, efforts to end that domination went nowhere. In 1996, for instance, Russia secured a World Bank loan for $58 million, earmarked for legal reform. One of the main goals of the loan, as stated in the contract, was to create a new system for recruiting and training judges, which would finally divorce them from the *procurature*. The term of the loan expires next month, but barely one-quarter of the money has been spent. The state agencies charged with reforming themselves are incapable of it. And not even a big loan, nor the money the state loses servicing it, is a sufficient motivator. So Russia's courts remain tailor-made for the "dictatorship of the law" that is Putin's stated ideal.

ALREADY, PUTIN'S TENURE has been marked by a string of attacks on the media—illegal under Russian law but unpunished by the courts. During the ongoing military campaign in Chechnya, the breadth of information deemed a "state secret"—whose disclosure is thus a federal offense—has been broadened beyond all reason. Special rules of journalistic accreditation, banned under existing law, were introduced not only for Chechnya but, in my experience, for neighboring republics as well. Many who apply for accreditation are turned down, and those accepted must be escorted in Chechnya by military personnel—a condition that, now that the war has shifted into its guerrilla phase, plainly endangers journalists' lives. (At least one journalist has already been killed simply for being in a car with uniformed Russians.) Not that journalists' well-being is of much concern to officials of Putin's government, who handed Radio Liberty reporter Andrei Babitsky to Chechen bandits in a blatantly illegal prisoner exchange in February. Babitsky is now in Moscow, facing bizarrely concocted criminal charges. Meanwhile, thanks to the control of the press that Putin's approach affords, the Russian public received a largely rosy account of the war in Chechnya and responded by electing Putin president by a landslide.

Putin's press ministry has also tightened its grip by issuing warnings to two newspapers, the leading daily *Kommersant* and the semiweekly *Novaya Gazeta*, for publishing interviews with Chechen President Aslan Maskhadov. Just before issuing the warnings, the ministry said that giving a forum to rebel representatives would be considered a violation of the law—though there is nothing in either the law on the media or the law on terrorism that could conceivably apply to such cases. Warnings are no mere formality: two press-ministry warnings constitute grounds for the nonrenewal of a broadcasting license, and three warnings cause a publishing license to be revoked.

The first casualty of the "two warnings and you're out" system will most likely be TV Tsentr, a network controlled by Moscow Mayor Yuri Luzhkov, a Kremlin foe. The network's license comes up for tender on May 24 because of two warnings received during the parliamentary election campaign last fall. Arbitrage courts have since annulled both warnings, but the press ministry has resolutely ignored their rulings.

Putin's next candidate for a shutdown could be my company, Media Most. Although its many holdings are editorially independent from one another—while *Itogi*, for example, held an unambiguously anti-war position from the beginning, the Most TV network NTV has voiced only occasional criticism—Media Most has become virtually the only remaining voice of liberal (as opposed to Communist or hypernationalist) opposition to the Kremlin. Putin himself has leaked statements making it clear he's out to get Most's owner, Vladimir Gusinsky. So the raid on Media Most's headquarters the other week—along with the Russian Central Bank's decision to appoint outside management to run Gusinsky's Most Bank (which is not formally related to the media holding)—hardly came as a surprise. Neither did the government's violation of legal provisions requiring office occupants and independent witnesses to be present during searches. Instead, scores of armed men stormed the two buildings, herded employees into the cafeterias—where they were held for most of the day—and removed truckloads of computer equipment and documents.

Meanwhile, even as he ignores existing laws, Putin is working to introduce new ones restricting the press still further. Legislation the government has sent to parliament would establish "hostility" as grounds for the state to revoke licenses of foreign-owned media operating in Russia—a direct reference to the U.S.-funded Radio Liberty, which a

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deputy press minister recently described as "hostile to the Russian state."

And, as if the current legal system weren't helpful enough to Putin, a think tank he formed last December is now developing proposals to make it still more pliant. According to a newly released plan, the constitutional court and the superior arbitrage court would be abolished, their functions handed to the Supreme Court—which is to say, back to the old Soviet-style system. This is significant because, so far, the only legal institutions that have stood up at all to attacks on the media at all have been the arbitrage courts. The constitutional court is likely to resist changes to the media law. But, with the abolition of it and of the arbitrage courts, there will be no legal authority left to declare the administration's attacks on the media illegal and unconstitutional. God knows the media won't be saying that sort of thing much longer. ■

The Catholic teachings of George W.

Spin Doctrine

By Franklin Foer

Is George W. Bush an unwitting papist? You wouldn't think so, given his infamous flirtation with anti-Catholic bigot Bob Jones—not to mention his very public born-again evangelicalism and his coterie of evangelical advisers. But Bush's big idea, compassionate conservatism, owes a great deal to Catholicism. Intellectual genealogies of the Bush campaign usually trace back to Marvin Olasky, the evangelical University of Texas academic who wrote the 1992 book *The Tragedy of American Compassion*. But Olasky's big idea—junking the welfare state in favor of moralistic charities—didn't come out of nowhere. It has strong roots in Catholic neoconservative doctrine, most importantly in the work of two intellectuals, Richard John Neuhaus and Michael Novak, who hatched the idea as a way to reconcile their two historically hostile loves: Catholic faith and faith in the free market.

Their primary tool has been the Catholic concept of "subsidiarity"—the idea that social problems are best understood and solved by the organizations and people closest to them. (When Bush met Catholic leaders last September, he acknowledged compassionate conservatism's debt to subsidiarity, though he mispronounced it "supsidiary.") Subsidiarity became an important part of Catholic doctrine with Pope Pius XI's 1931 encyclical *Quadragesimo Anno*. Pius hadn't intended to presage Barry Goldwater. He'd meant to triangulate, to split the difference between the twin evils of soulless laissez-faire capitalism and soulless socialism. Like all calls for a third way, the church was vague about how much state intervention it would tolerate. But it probably wanted a fair amount. At least, that was the interpretation of both liberal welfare staters like Franklin Roosevelt and corporatists like Benito Mussolini. In fact, in a 1932 speech, FDR pointed to the encyclical to justify intervention in the market, which he described in clearly Catholic language as "social justice through social action."

This statist strain is still potent in Catholic politics. You can see it in Europe's Christian Democratic parties, which have traditionally eschewed Republican-style libertarianism. You can see it in America's Catholic bishops (with their thundering invocations of government responsibility to the poor), in America's Catholic liberals (the Kennedys, House Minority Whip David Bonior, or Tip O'Neill), and even in some Catholic conservatives (Pat Buchanan). But, in the last 25 years, Catholic neocons have tried to nudge the statists aside and reconcile papal social teachings with the unfettered market. They have lobbied the Vatican through an international coterie of like-minded cardinals and intellectuals. (Although, truth be told, the pope remains the world's most prominent critic of corporate capitalism.) And they have churned out reams of essays and books to prove the harmony of Catholicism and capitalism. Novak, a scholar at the American Enterprise Institute, has written a theological justification of the corporation and a shelf of books championing classical liberalism. As Neuhaus, editor of the influential journal *First Things*, puts it, "Capitalism is the economic corollary of the Christian understanding of man's nature and destiny."

Like all authentic neocons, Neuhaus and Novak started on the left. As a Lutheran priest (who later converted), Neuhaus headlined anti-war rallies and toiled in ghetto parishes. Novak, a sociologist who studied white ethnics, shilled for Eugene McCarthy's presidential campaign. But both were ticked off by liberalism's dalliance with liberation theology and the nuclear freeze. Fuming at the left, they went down the Kristol path, becoming fierce opponents of the welfare state and brash proponents of the private sector.

But, unlike the mostly secular Jews who traveled the same ideological road, Neuhaus and Novak saw their project as theological as well as political. To reconcile their capitalist faith in self-interest with Catholicism's abnegation of self-interest, Neuhaus and Novak have not only highlighted subsidiarity, they have redefined Pius's concept of it—removing any statist inflection and making it a devolutionary doctrine. Rhetorically, subsidiarity latches them to the Catholic tradition of social justice and gives them cover when their left-wing Catholic brethren accuse them of callously betraying the catechism with their hostility to government expenditures. There's no need for the sclerotic welfare state, Novak has argued, when "the creative impulse is located in the people at the grass roots who no longer trust big government." In neocon hands, subsidiarity is a moral argument that state and local government (instead of the feds) and local community groups (instead of government at all) best serve the poor.

For Republicans, frequently accused of callousness themselves, the rhetoric serves the same purpose: It helps them deflect charges that they're indifferent to the plight of the poor. Speechwriter Peggy Noonan, a Catholic, tried to work Neuhaus and Novak's notions into President Bush's

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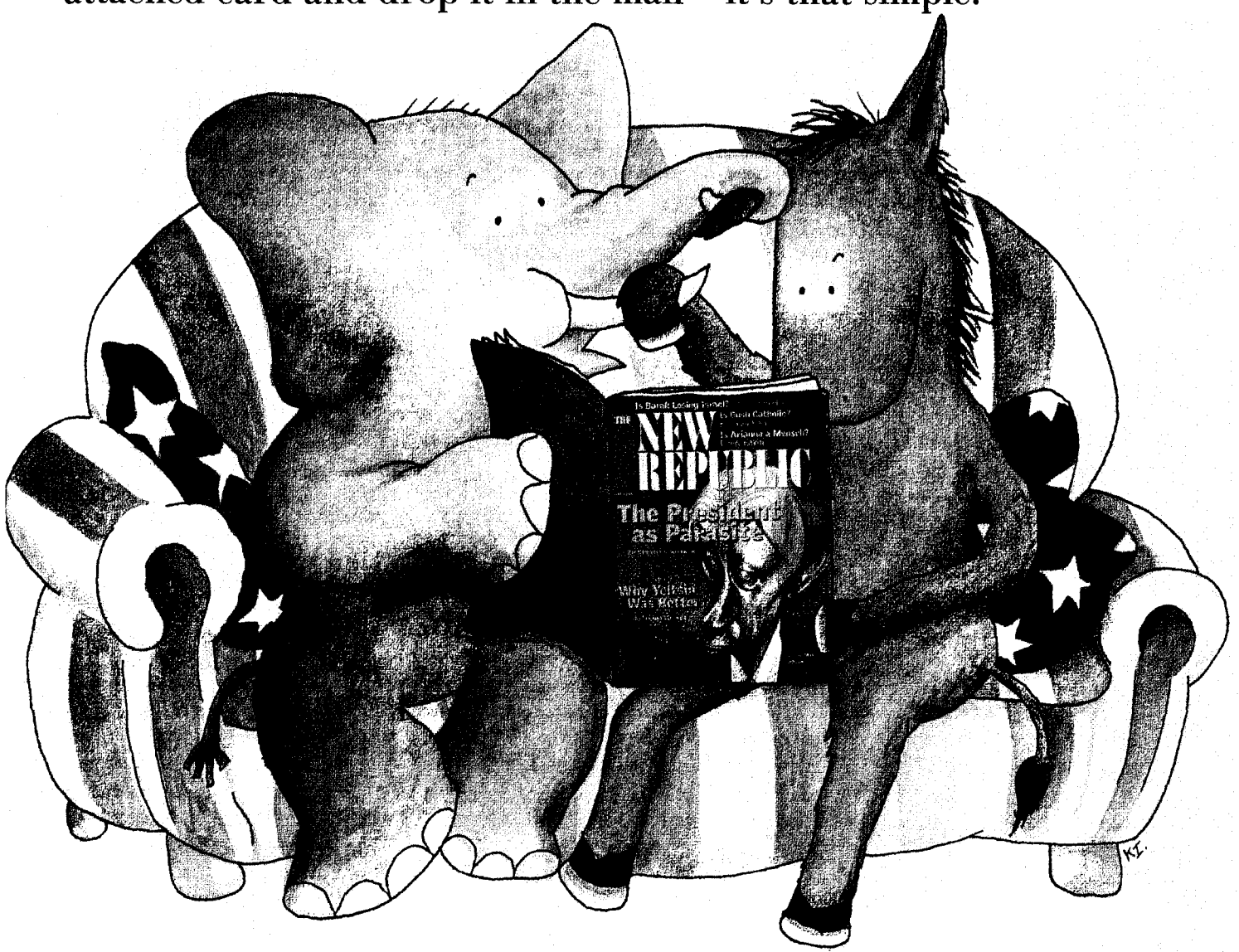

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repertoire. (Remember "A thousand points of light"?) And it's no coincidence that George W., who faces even greater pressure to shake his party's reputation for coldhearted libertarianism, has incorporated neocon Catholic language into his campaign. In his first major stump speech last July, Bush invoked "solidarity" and the "common good," two phrases central to Catholic thought, while proposing to spend a small fortune on faith-based charities.

Of course, the Bush campaign has also called on secular-minded advisers, most notably James Q. Wilson of "broken windows" fame. But clear ties bind Bush and his proposals to the Catholic neocons. In meetings with Neuhaus, Deal Hudson (editor of the conservative Catholic journal *Crisis*), and Catholic criminologist John DiIulio, Bush has received tutorials on Catholic social teachings. His speechwriter Mike Gerson, an evangelical, has consumed the works of Neuhaus, Novak, and their comrade George Weigel. And even Olasky says the campaign agenda has its roots in subsidiarity: "Catholic social teachings and subsidiarity have been a strong strain in the shaping of compassionate conservatism.... It has provided a structural framework."

One reason it's so easy for evangelicals to adopt the teachings of Catholic intellectuals is that neocon Catholics have always made a big deal of their ecumenism, especially toward evangelicals. In 1994, *First Things* published a declaration titled "Evangelicals and Catholics Together." Signed by Neuhaus, Pat Robertson, and Chuck Colson, it stated that "there has been in recent years a growing convergence and cooperation between Evangelicals and Catholics" and that "we will do all in our power to resist proposals for euthanasia, eugenics, and population control that ... betray the moral truths of our constitutional order." After the Bob Jones episode, Neuhaus went so far as to deflect attention from Jones and blame the "anti-Catholic and anti-evangelical prejudices entrenched among those who, in a moment of partisan contortion, expressed such touching concern about alleged anti-Catholicism in the current presidential race."

But evangelical reliance on Catholics isn't simply a function of goodwill; it's a function of need. Because of their conscious disengagement from public life, from the Scopes trial to the 1970s, as well as their often anti-intellectual focus on biblical literalism, American evangelicals have not developed nearly as vibrant a public intellectual tradition as Catholics have. This reliance extends beyond subsidiarity per se. On abortion, for instance, evangelicals, including Bush, now subscribe to the argument that the state should "expand the circle of freedom" and "protect the weakest member of society"—an argument about solidarity initially developed by Neuhaus.

Catholic neocons, hoping for a long-term alliance with evangelicals built around their core ideas, are thrilled at their intellectual influence within the Bush campaign. But the central test of that alliance is neither intellectual nor theological but electoral. The campaign, which in the weeks following the Bob Jones debacle put a priest onstage with Bush at every possible opportunity, clearly has more than a theoretical interest in Neuhaus and Novak's work. Even before Bob Jones, Bush Svengali Karl Rove said churchgoing Catholics would be this year's soccer moms—the essential swing voters to whom rhetoric must be tailored. *Crisis*'s Hudson vets important speeches. And Bush has explicitly rejected the "leave us alone" libertarianism that is thought to drive away the socially conservative Catholics who voted for Ronald Reagan but against Bob Dole. If George W. wins in November, expect Catholic social doctrine to make a prominent appearance in his State of the Union address. If he loses, subsidiarity's theoretical elegance won't matter. It will be thrown out the window and replaced with some updated version of the more relativistic Rockefeller Republicanism that, if it has religious roots at all, finds them in mainline Protestantism. And if that fails? Perhaps Buddhism has an untapped neoconservative strain. ■

Why tax shelters exist.

Company Man

By Jonathan Chait

Like most Washington lobbyists, Ken Kies has filled his office with photographs of himself in the presence of political luminaries. There is one of him embracing House Speaker Dennis Hastert; another depicts him with President Clinton in the Oval Office, Kies's mouth forming a thin, slightly crooked smile. But, among the dozens of photos, one stands out.

It shows Kies next to Senate Majority Leader Trent Lott. As in the other photos, both men are smiling. But, in this one, Lott's hand is wrapped around Kies's neck, as if to strangle him. Kies explains that this is simply a good-natured joke: During budget negotiations a few years ago, when Kies was still chief of staff of the Joint Tax Committee, Lott sought desperately to insert some small measure into a final bill, and Kies stymied him. So the mock strangulation, which would appear to be the gesture of a powerful man joshingly lording over his subordinate, is, in fact, the opposite. Kies is the victor, and Lott's pose is an expression of impotent frustration.

Kies has since moved from Capitol Hill to K Street, where he is chief lobbyist for the accounting firm Pricewaterhouse-Coopers. But he is still winning power struggles against politicians who nominally outrank him—and now even more so. Kies's current mission is to protect the thriving tax-shelter industry, of which his employer is a prominent member. The people pushing to curtail those shelters include such ideologically diverse heavyweights as Larry Summers, secretary of the Treasury, and William Roth, chairman of the Senate Finance Committee. "The other side," says one reform advocate, "is a one-man industry called Ken Kies." And Kies, even his most bitter foes admit, is probably going to win.

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Kies's likely success is all the more remarkable because he is defending a practice that, not long ago, would have been thought indefensible. Tax-sheltering is far more disreputable than the normal game of finding advantage through tax loopholes. A loophole is a special exemption that Congress deliberately writes into law—say, a tax break for certain kinds of oil companies. That's bad enough, but a tax shelter is worse: a way for companies to reduce their tax burden by finding some mechanism Congress never intended. Typically, an accounting firm such as Kies's will offer to sell a shelter to a corporation in return for a hefty chunk of the savings. The shelters cooked up by such firms are usually fantastically complex schemes that involve economically meaningless transactions designed solely to avoid taxes. In one famous case, for instance, an American company leased a town hall in Europe in order to claim a rent deduction; it then leased the hall right back to the town.

In addition to being borderline—if not outright—illegal and depriving the Treasury of revenue, tax shelters are massively inefficient. Companies devote brilliant minds and billions of dollars to sophisticated paper-shuffling. Economists call this "deadweight loss"—corporations wasting resources trying to get around the law rather than following the invisible hand. Of course, a dollop of economic inefficiency might be acceptable if the beneficiaries were, say, minimum-wage workers. But tax-sheltering creates the worst of all economic worlds. It combines the maldistribution of laissez-faire capitalism—the beneficiaries of tax shelters are owners of capital and their ethically challenged but well-compensated hirelings—with the inefficiency of a planned economy.

Nobody knows precisely how much corporate tax-sheltering goes on. (Offending companies tend not to put out press releases on the topic.) But evidence suggests it has shot up in recent years. Corporations always report more income to their stockholders than to the IRS, but the gap between the two groups' information has widened. Moreover, in the last five years, corporate tax receipts have grown at less than one-fifth the rate of individual tax receipts. Last year, during an economic boom, corporate tax revenues actually fell.

How can this happen? One reason is the mismatch between the cops and the robbers. Clever tax lawyers can make much more money dreaming up tax shelters for accounting firms than they can rooting them out for the government. The schemes, by design, are intricate enough to escape detection by the IRS. They work like viruses: when the tax man ferrets out a scheme, accountants mutate it, and the game begins again. Articles in *Forbes* and *The American Lawyer* on the tax-shelter boom suggest that this has created a vicious cycle. As more companies realize they are not likely to get caught, more try tax-sheltering. Meanwhile, the more the practice expands, the thinner the IRS's resources are stretched, making tax shelters safer still.

Tax-shelter proliferation has reached such epidemic proportions that it has actually spurred a backlash among the more conscientious members of the tax profession. A few scrupulous tax lawyers have anonymously leaked details of shelter schemes to the IRS. The tax division of the American Bar Association has begun to crusade publicly against tax-sheltering. Opposition to tax shelters has taken hold in both houses of Congress. The main proponents of reform are the Treasury Department and House Democrat Lloyd Doggett of Texas, but even Roth, normally a slavish ally of business, has announced his support for at least modest reform.

Roth, alas, is an exception among congressional Republicans, who, while avoiding rousing pronouncements in defense of tax shelters, don't want to eliminate them, either. After all, while tax-sheltering may not make sense in terms of economic theory, most Washington Republicans are not free-market purists—they are defenders of business, interested in protecting the interests of the well-to-do above all else.

This can be seen most clearly in the support prominent

DAVID SUTER

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Republicans exhibit for economically useless practices that benefit the affluent. A new book detailing offshore money havens, for instance, carries blurbs by the Cato Institute's Stephen Moore, the leading supply-sider in Washington, and Republican Representative Billy Tauzin of Louisiana, a proponent of abolishing the progressive income tax. Last February, House Majority Leader Dick Armey obliquely defended tax shelters as well, saying: "The business of a corporation is . . . to maximize its earnings for its shareholders. Since tax is a very large part of their costs, anything they can do to minimize that share of their costs would be a legitimate thing." Armey does not claim tax shelters make the economy more efficient; he simply assumes that the interests of corporations are synonymous with the public good.

The job of turning this generalized prejudice into a credible-sounding public argument has fallen upon Kies, and he is perfectly trained for it. Kies began his career with the Cleveland law firm Baker & Hostetler. After Ronald Reagan's election, Kies left for Washington, where he worked for Texas Republican Bill Archer on the Ways and Means Committee. In 1987 he returned to his old firm, this time as a Washington lobbyist. When the GOP took control of Congress in 1994, Archer—now chairman of Ways and Means—plucked Kies to head the Joint Tax Committee. Two years ago, Kies left again, and, after a bidding war among several Washington firms, he chose PricewaterhouseCoopers, with an annual salary reported to approach $1 million.

With his every turn through the revolving door, the boundaries between Kies's role as a corporate representative and as a government official have grown less and less distinct. In 1996, while working on the Joint Tax Committee, Kies took 42 speaking trips, for which business shelled out $57,000 in travel costs—a sum that put him ahead of not only every other staffer but every member of Congress as well. Today, as a private lobbyist, he continues to hold immense sway with Archer. "I've never seen a guy who's got an influence over the tax chairman like he has," says a former federal tax official. It is because of this relationship that most reformers assume no reform bill will pass. Any tax-shelter bill must go through Archer's committee—Kies's home turf.

In one of his recent appearances before Roth's committee, Kies testified that "there is no demonstrated problem with 'corporate tax shelters' that would require sweeping legislation." He is careful to always put the phrase "corporate tax shelters" in quotation marks, as if to suggest that the entire notion were a myth. In his K Street office, Kies dryly observes that "Chairman Archer, at least in his public comments, does not appear to be persuaded that there's a need [for a bill]."

Indeed, Archer seems persuaded—probably by Kies—of precisely the opposite. But, then, Kies only provides rationalizations for things that Archer and his GOP colleagues deeply want to believe. Recently Archer assured the Tax Executives Institute that tax shelters are not a problem and, in so doing, summed up his entire worldview. "Corporations are not bad," the chairman explained. "Corporations are very, very good." ■

Arianna Huffington and the case for inconsistency.

The New New Her

By EMILY EAKIN

IT IS EASY to make fun of Arianna Huffington. She has a funny accent. She has a lurid past. She donned a negligee and got into bed with Al Franken on Comedy Central. And now the Greek-born former Newt Gingrich confidante—the ex-wife of multimillionaire Republican congressman and record-breaking campaign spender Michael Huffington—would have us believe she is Paul Wellstone in an Armani pantsuit, fulminating against corporate welfare, campaign finance corruption, poll-driven politicians, attack ads, national drug policy (for ignoring the treatment and prevention of drug abuse), the criminal justice system (for discriminating against minorities), and, most of all, what she perceives as gross public indifference to America's underclass.

Huffington has written a book, *How to Overthrow the Government*; launched a website (Overthrowthegov.com) featuring an eleven-point manifesto for political reform; and commissioned splashy TV, radio, and print ads to promote her cause. She has befriended Warren Beatty and urged him to run for president. She has opened her Brentwood mansion to liberal pundits and causes—Christopher Hitchens, Jesse Jackson, Randall Robinson, and the campaign finance reform group Public Campaign—and has begun appearing at progressive political events. For the past three years, she has tithed ten percent of her income to poverty-fighting groups.

To a lot of people on the left, this looks like the kind of publicity stunt for which she is famous. "I think Arianna Huffington is an opportunist," says *Nation* columnist Katha Pollitt. "I think she's dishonest. I think she's superficial. I think she's manipulative. I'm just not impressed that somebody in the year 2000 with the Republican Party on the run and Gingrich in purgatory says, 'Oh, well, maybe the federal government has a role to play.'" Says the democratic political consultant Bob Shrum: "I used to debate Arianna on 'Cross-

EMILY EAKIN is a contributing writer at *Lingua Franca*.

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fire,' and from what I hear of what she's saying now, I was obviously debating a different person. What do they do in *Star Wars*—travel 28 parsecs in one second by some magic propulsive device? She was about as conservative as you can get, and suddenly she's for activism and social conscience. I think she's just blown on the winds of fads." Even positive reviews of *How to Overthrow the Government* can't help questioning the motives of the book's author. "Is this a profound conversion or just another protean phase in the life of an ambitious climber?" wondered Joe Conason in the *Los Angeles Times*.

TO WHICH THE appropriate answer may be: Who cares? American politics has limited tolerance for change (or, for that matter, ambitious women). In this business, constancy is an unparalleled virtue; campaigns often boil down to exposing contradictions between an opponent's current position and his record. So, for instance, pundits attacked Bill Bradley for ditching his opposition to ethanol subsidies just in time for the Iowa caucus, and Bradley attacked the now pro-choice Al Gore for taking anti-abortion positions when he was a congressman from Tennessee. And the merits of the position to which each man had converted mattered less than the act—damning by all accounts—of conversion itself.

It's probably not surprising, then, that many in the press have reacted to Huffington's lurch to the left not by analyzing her agenda but by recounting her checkered past. When constancy is the measure of moral worth, Huffington falls spectacularly short. A campaign finance reformer who goaded her husband into spending $30 million on a Senate race for which he was hopelessly unqualified and about which he was not particularly enthusiastic? An anti-poverty agitator who once argued that spiritualism could save the underclass and whose own record of volunteering was exposed in *Vanity Fair* as a self-promoting lie? A crusader against political corruption whose own books—biographies of Picasso and Maria Callas—have been tainted by charges of plagiarism? But, while the pundits recite from a hefty catalogue of sins and roll their eyes at Huffington's righteous new armor, dozens of grassroots leaders are speed-dialing her cellphone number and munching crudités in her Brentwood mansion. For these practical-minded activists, Huffington's sincerity is beside the point. What she has to offer is infinitely more valuable: the purse strings, the connections, and the political savvy to get their work noticed.

The organizations Huffington promotes in her book, organizations with every reason to be wary of exploitation by celebrity self-promoters, are unstinting in their praise of her. Deborah Constance, the founder of A Place Called Home, a rehabilitation center for former gang members in South Central Los Angeles, says Huffington makes frequent appearances before her group, serves on the board, donates money, and uses her media connections to orchestrate high-profile fund-raisers, including a comedy night with Bill Maher. "Arianna's brought her children down on holidays to feed the hungry and brought her ex-husband down to feed the hungry," Constance says. "She's been very, very willing to come in here and sit down with all the gang members and really listen to them. She's totally openhearted to everyone and everything. She's been wonderful." Jim Wallis, founder of Call to Renewal, an ecumenical Christian group that promotes federal and private-sector coordination on poverty initiatives, says he consults with Huffington several times a week. "I really vetted her," Wallis says. "I pressed her on lots of issues. I found she really is very intelligent and thoughtful. She's tenacious about taking on this issue of poverty." (Huffington is donating one-quarter of her book's royalties to Call to Renewal and two other nonprofits; any other profits will be used to promote her website.)

ROB BABBONI

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HUFFINGTON'S LATEST PROJECT involves this summer's Democratic and Republican conventions in Los Angeles and Philadelphia, respectively. To call attention to issues—income inequality, the drug war, and campaign finance reform—that the parties are likely to ignore, and to take advantage of the standing army of bored journalists and TV crews, Huffington has decided to stage a pair of shadow conventions. To pull them off, she has asked Mike Dolan, director of Ralph Nader's Global Trade Watch and a lead organizer of the Seattle protests against the World Trade Organization, to help her. She has raised $500,000 for the effort and is holding regular meetings with potential organizers in her home. Although the program's specifics are under wraps, Dolan allows that Huffington "has a good idea." He admits, almost reluctantly, to being impressed. "She's kind of like our Norma McCorvey," he says, referring to the *Roe* v. *Wade* plaintiff turned anti-abortion activist. "Right now I'm giving Arianna the benefit of the doubt. And not just because she gave a reception for me where I was able to meet lots of people and talk about Seattle and where we go from here and do some organizing in her very well-appointed living room."

Of course, Huffington's money—and her access to others'—is one of the reasons activists like her. But it's not the only one. Thanks to her well-placed political connections and high-profile biweekly syndicated column, Huffington gets results. In 1997 she wrote a column decrying the pharmaceutical industry's ethically dubious encroachment on the market for children's drugs. The Food and Drug Administration, she wrote indignantly, was expected to approve Eli Lilly's application to make Prozac available for pediatric use—on the basis of a single large-scale study with mixed results. In a follow-up column, Huffington added more damning facts: a list of congressional leaders who received donations from Lilly's PAC, as well as the amount of the company's soft-money contributions during the 1996 election ($746,675, up from zero in 1992). Not content just to pontificate, Huffington called her friend Representative Dennis Kucinich of Ohio, a Democrat on the House Government Reform and Oversight Committee, and urged him to put pressure on the FDA. He did. Eventually, President Clinton jumped on the issue as well, calling for drug companies to more thoroughly test medicines likely to be prescribed for children. Huffington, says Kucinich, "was ahead on this by at least a year, if not longer. Her writing moved me to get involved. She makes things happen."

Micah Sifry, a senior analyst at Public Campaign—a nonprofit organization that promotes campaign finance reform—offers a similar story about Huffington's efforts to promote campaign finance legislation in Massachusetts. In 1998, the state passed a "clean money" ballot initiative banning soft money and guaranteeing candidates public funds. But both the Democrat-controlled state legislature and Republican Governor Paul Cellucci tried to ensure that the new law would never be enforced—by declining to allocate funds and calling for a second referendum on the issue. At that point, Sifry says, Huffington's intervention was decisive: "The governor and state legislature nearly emasculated the laws. She wrote a column and put in a call to Governor Cellucci. This guy felt pressure from a fellow Republican." In the end, Cellucci caved, agreeing to fund a study on how to implement the clean-money laws. "What's been impressive to me," Sifry adds, "is that Arianna's gone further than just using her column and face time. She's not just one more person we have as an ally. She's shown some clear commitment to follow through behind the scenes, where there's no payoff."

There's more. In a scathing column last June, Huffington berated Gore (co-chair of the U.S.–South African Binational Commission), whom she blamed for the fact that South African AIDS patients were paying premium prices for their U.S. drugs. Citing Gore's close ties to the pharmaceutical lobby and quoting the legalistic equivocation she'd received from a Gore official, Huffington, along with AIDS activists who heckled the vice president at public events, embarrassed Gore's campaign. "As a result of her clearly exposing this issue," says Representative Jesse Jackson Jr. of Illinois, who supported her efforts, "you saw the vice president go to the United Nations and offer an additional $100 million toward AIDS relief in sub-Saharan Africa." Jackson says Huffington was also effective in publicizing "just how perverted the money interests were" in the Colombia drug-war aid package approved last month. Picking up on a report in *The New York Times*, Huffington noted that of the $1.7 billion, $400 million went to two American helicopter companies—both generous political donors—while a Democrat-sponsored amendment requesting more than $1 billion for treatment was defeated. Jackson says he sent a column by Huffington to his colleagues, urging them to oppose the bill.

HUFFINGTON'S NEW CRUSADE won't win any awards for originality or sophistication. Based on columns written during the last several years, *How to Overthrow the Government* is an eclectic hodgepodge of populist nostrums. Some, like adopting Dean Ornish's lifestyle regimen or starting a political party, seem trivial. ("Start your own individual party?" scoffs Katha Pollitt. "That's for children.") Others seem faintly contradictory. (Huffington hates political polls because they exert too much influence over events *and* because events often prove them wrong.) Even at its most ambitious—her chapter on the drug-industry lobby and the one on campaign finance reform, which examines a couple of academic proposals as well as Vermont's new clean-money laws—the book won't try a reader's patience—or brain.

But the grassroots activists Huffington champions don't need a deep thinker; they need a savvy marketer. And, as a marketing gambit, the book is undeniably clever, laden with catchy facts and figures about political corruption (since 1997, the number of registered lobbyists has grown by 37 percent) and poverty (at 21 percent, the U.S. child poverty rate is the highest in the developed world), all conveyed in Huffington's trademark high-comic, eminently digestible dudgeon. No wonder the readers who have reviewed her book on Amazon.com—the ultimate populist forum—are wowed ("She tells the REAL story of what is going on in Washington and what we, as concerned citizens, can do about it!").

Unlike other books on politics, Huffington's sells. Pub-

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lished in February, *How to Overthrow the Government* has already sold more than 40,000 copies; it spent several weeks on the *Los Angeles Times*'s best-seller list. Overthrowthegov.com is also doing well. Since the website debuted in January, it has received 1.5 million hits, and 20,000 people have signed its pledge to hang up on pollsters. Book-related events attract a sizable turnout. In February, Huffington held a "Boston Tea Party" on the Santa Monica pier: she stuffed ballot boxes with "dirty" money and tossed them into the Pacific Ocean. The dunking party drew three times as many people as showed up at the same spot an hour earlier for a campaign appearance by Gore. The same month, after *Nation* writer Marc Cooper interviewed Huffington on his radio talk show, the station offered her book as a premium during its fund-raising drive and gave away 600 copies. "To put that in perspective," says Cooper, "our previous individual best-selling premium was around 150 to 200 copies. There's clearly something there that they wanted to hear."

IN FACT, HUFFINGTON'S lack of gravitas—her public fickleness—may be a political asset. Like Minnesota Governor Jesse Ventura, she has a knack for finding the intersection between politics and popular culture. And she has an intuitive feel for how to tap into Americans' political disillusionment without offending their social and economic complacency with threatening talk. Like the anarchists who populated the protests in Seattle and Washington, D.C., she makes activism seem fun. Is there an intellectual cost? Sure. But all you have to do is look at the moribund campaign finance reform and anti-poverty movements of the '90s to realize that the alternative is probably worse. "Arianna legitimizes a lot of the work people in the populist, grassroots movements are doing, because she comes from anything but that kind of background," says Bill Gallagher, director of the Oaks Project, a California-based, Nader-affiliated group that promotes citizen leadership. "For her to embrace what we're doing is a validation by one of the mainstream people out there that what we're doing isn't something fringy but important for everybody. She's forced some of our volunteers to confront some of their own stereotypes—especially people on the liberal side." "Everybody has their uses," says Public Campaign's Sifry. "Arianna is not the only arrow in our quiver, but through her you can reach new audiences and get your message into places that are difficult to get."

Consider Huffington's TV spots, engineered by Jesse Ventura's media consultant Bill Hillsman, which aired in February and March on cable-TV stations in several urban areas. They counteract viewers' belief that activism is for the lunatic fringe and not the self-respecting suburbanite by making fun of themselves, diffusing their threat with the goofy irony of a "Saturday Night Live" skit. In one, a thirty-something ponytailed brunette wheels a cart down a supermarket aisle. "Between soccer games, working, raising a family, I hardly have time these days to overthrow the government," she says brightly. "But if politicians won't clean up campaigns, maybe we can make it happen by boycotting products and companies whose money keeps their pet politicians in office. Let's make *shopping* a political force to be reckoned with!" In another, a preppy black college grad sits in a coffee shop, a latte at his elbow. "Well, Dad," he says, staring calmly at the camera, "I've decided to overthrow the government." He goes on to explain how he's planning to join a third party and push for same-day voter registration—"because it works in favor of new candidates." In the final spot, a slightly manic-looking grandmother describes how she's doing her bit to drive pollsters out of business by hanging up on them. Shaking a fist at the camera, she breaks into her best Austin Powers imitation: "Power to the people, baby!" (None of the spots mention Huffington; they end by referring viewers to Overthrowthegov.com.)

THE ADS SUCCEED for the same reason Huffington does: They bristle with irony and self-consciousness. Huffington may be a self-promoter, but she's an exceptionally self-aware one. She understands (as does Clinton) that, while pundits may dislike political metamorphoses, popular culture loves redemptions and rebirths. Rather than trying to resolve the contradictions in her life, she skillfully exploits them. And she seems to realize that her importance lies less in what she says than in the fact that it is she who is saying it. In late March, I spent a day with her, observing her Oprah-like ability to connect with audiences as she promoted strategies for political reform at Hofstra, Yale, and Columbia Universities. Each speech was a variation on the themes of her book, delivered animatedly and without notes to attentive, enthusiastic crowds. At Columbia, she addressed the campus political union on campaign finance reform. Afterward, I asked Nora Simpson, the sophomore who organized the event, why she invited Huffington. "I was curious," said Simpson, who told me she has worked on ten Democratic campaigns, including Hillary Clinton's. "Here's this woman whom we've always thought of as an ultraconservative saying, 'I've had a political epiphany.' I mean, she really had it made: media darling, Republican hostess, the whole thing. For her to say, 'I did research, and I realize the income gap is really terrible'—that shows character. To see someone who clearly believed otherwise be interested enough in the world and curious enough about her surroundings to do some thinking and change her views—that takes guts."

In her talk on campaign finance reform that evening, Huffington managed to include—as she had earlier in the day—a reference to her ex-husband's $30 million campaign profligacy. "One of my problems with the current campaign finance reforms," she said, "is candidates spending their own money. Candidates like Steve Forbes, Al Checchi—or my ex-husband. I want campaign finance reform to be retroactive so my kids can get their money back." The crowd laughed. It was a deft bit of legerdemain, a joke that positioned her—with respect to the systemic political corruption she deplores—as a believably human combination of perpetrator and victim. Later in the talk, Huffington attacked Gore for "shamelessly taking on the mantle of a reformer." Flushing slightly, she hastened to clarify. "It's not that I don't think people can change," she said. "God knows I've changed." ■

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Stanley Kauffmann on Films

The Muses in Manhattan

THERE IS AN ingenious touch in the new **Hamlet** (Miramax). The duel scene near the finish always presents a staging problem: how to deal with the fact that Claudius doesn't stop Gertrude from drinking the poison. In the text he simply says, aside, as she drinks: "It is the poison'd cup: it is too late." Why is it too late? Why couldn't this clever schemer have found some way to stop her? Through the centuries, directors have tussled with this problem. But in this film Gertrude tells us, through her behavior, that she knows the cup is poisoned, and she deliberately drinks it down to save her son from drinking it. Only a slight hint beforehand suggests that she suspects Claudius of treachery and she gets only a spot of pantomime to put the point across; still, it is a handy solution to the problem.

And it is all the more surprising here because, up to that point, this film, set in New York in 2000, hasn't been particularly concerned with the difficulties in the text. Michael Almereyda, the adapter-director, cannot have retained more than one-third of the lines, probably fewer. (The contest here is not for the crown of Denmark but for control of the Denmark Corporation in a skyscraper.) When a difficulty arose, Almereyda simply slashed lines to get rid of it. For instance, he wanted Hamlet to show his play-within-a-play on a video tape. What, then, to do about the visiting troupe of players? Eliminate them, of course.

The rearranging of *Hamlet* is hardly a new idea. The role has been played by women (Sarah Bernhardt, for one) and by a 13-year-old boy (Master Betty at Drury Lane in 1805); every culture has molded it to its will; the film world embraced it even before the advent of sound. Through the centuries, modern-dress versions were frequent in the theater, and now Almereyda brings it into this new century.

So here we have the old idea of Shakespeare updated, in decor and behavior. Many have compared this film to Kaurismaki's *Hamlet Goes Business* (1987) which I missed; I did see Ian McKellen's fascist *Richard III* (1995) and Buz Luhrmann's MTV *Romeo and Juliet* (1997), but, even without them, the modernizing of Shakespeare could hardly be shockingly novel. Rather, it feels somehow cozy to see that good old avant-garde approach once more, to see (in this case) Hamlet in a mod wool cap wandering in Manhattan, to see Polonius wiring Ophelia before the "nunnery" scene so that he and Claudius can hear what she and Hamlet say and so that Hamlet's discovery of the wire is what sets him ranting.

The trouble is elsewhere: not that the director wanted to bring the play closer to the current audience but that he hasn't done so. Anyone who knows the play may get an occasional reminder of it; but anyone else will not get much hint of the depth of the characters and the magnitude of their drama. When we hear Ambroise Thomas's opera of *Hamlet*, we know we are getting not Shakespeare but nineteenth-century Paris in all its plumpness. At Almereyda's *Hamlet*, we get not Shakespeare but East Village exhibitionistic coolness. Inevitably, the acting is seen through a distorting lens because the text is so shredded and re-arranged. In any case, Ethan Hawke was the perfect choice for this Hamlet because his slithering, mumbling approach fits the essentially off-hand feeling of the film. The director doesn't want any touch of the theater or of classical tradition in the performances—which is why the classically trained Liev Schreiber seems out of place as the Laertes—and Hawke is precisely the person to let the (condensed) role leak out of him on to the screen. "To be or not to be" by Hawke sounds just right when he mumbles (some of) it in a video shop. Julia Stiles, the Ophelia, is exactly the singles-bar girl who might go mad, which she does, at the Guggenheim Museum. Kyle MacLachlan and Diane Venora as the king and queen do what they can with their pre-shrunk roles, but it isn't even uphill all the way, it's a plateau. For those who don't know Bill Murray as a dry comic, his Polonius may seem like a last-minute substitution—as if a visitor to the set had been thrust into the part in an emergency so that they could get on with the shooting. The only person in the cast besides Schreiber who gives some sense of the size of the work that is here being battered is Sam Shepard—admirable man—as the Ghost.

To level the most serious charge against this film, I dig up an old-fashioned term: beauty. Almereyda isn't interested in it. Of course, beauty is not in the post-modernist lexicon and, even without agreeing, we can understand. (I have seen elocutionary, attitudinizing productions of *Hamlet* that were suffocating.) But this play survives—reigns—because of its beauty, not the abstract profundity of its themes or the universality of its mysteries in themselves but the beauty of the way they are expressed. *Hamlet* exists because of, and through its, language. ("Absent thee from felicity a while" has my vote as the loveliest line of verse in the English language.) Yes, the play is almost always condensed a bit in performance—Kenneth Branagh retained too much in his film—but to rip out great chunks because they do not fit a director's design is like altering a giant's robe for a pygmy. To mash the language as an obstacle that must be cleared away for the modern audience is to cheat that audience. Only Schreiber and Shepard show some glimpse of this truth.

Watching this film is only to watch for Almereyda's gimmicks. (Much of his career has been in science-fiction.) These do pop up fairly steadily. Hamlet gets his invitation to the duel not from Osric but from a fax. But this sort of cleverness is self-reflexive. When Peter Sellars put *The Marriage of Figaro* in an apartment atop the Trump Tower, he left the music alone, thus the production had some added wryness through the contextual change for Mozart—true Mozart. But Almereyda's film is only an attempt by a director to utilize Hamlet for personal display—at Shakespeare's expense. It has mildly entertaining moments, but that's all.

Speaking of classics in New York, here is **Center Stage** (Columbia), about a Manhattan ballet school. It's called the American Ballet Academy, but the Lincoln Center setting is something more than a tip-off that the academy is modeled on the School of American Ballet, itself an adjunct of the New York City Ballet. The screenplay by Carol Heikennen follows a group of young dancers as they apply for admission to the academy, are accepted, and move through a tough year of training, at the end of which only six—three males, three females—will be chosen for the ballet company.

Nothing in the screenplay is surprising (except for some twists at the end that are overripe Hollywood corn), yet much of

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it delights. The friendships and rivalries, the love interests and disinterests, are all essentially familiar; the dialogue is only moderately fresh; but it is all set amidst musicality and grace. I am so inexpert in ballet that the new students seemed to me almost as wonderful as the seasoned dancers. It was one of those times when ignorance was blessed by bliss.

Nicholas Hytner, who directed *The Madness of King George*, has some grasp of the theatrical, literally and otherwise, and he decorates *Center Stage* with flourish and excitement, aided by Geoffrey Simpson's adoring cinematography. Amanda Schull, the most prominent of the students, is appealing as person and performer. Ethan Stiefel, who in his spare time is a ballet star, gives almost diabolical edge to the dancer who gets entangled with Schull. Zoe Saldana sizzles as the troublesome member of the group. Peter Gallagher, usually employed as a sex bomb (*American Beauty*, for instance), here is the head of the school and gives the man quiet dignity.

I am not much of a balletomane, but I have always liked whatever "backstage" films about ballet have come along—not many—that provide the chance to see the making of dancers, the exaltation of everyday bodies into another physical realm. (The first such film for me was Jean Benoit-Levy's *Ballerina* back in the '30s, with the bewitching Mia Slavenska.) Maybe this is because such a film's interweaving of the diurnal with the balletic, which can't occur in actual performance, heightens the transcendence of the dancing. To put it another way, you don't have to be a balletomane in order to glow at *Center Stage*. ■

What stands in the way of Russia is Russia.

Putin and Other Parasites

By STEPHEN KOTKIN

I.

PEOPLE SAY THAT there are two Russias: Moscow and the rest of the country. This is certainly the view of those who have not grasped that elite Moscow is itself two distinct worlds, the populous apparatchik nation (notably including the tycoons, who bleed into the executive power) and the rest. And even more overlooked is the fact that the insiders, too, divide into the mass of interconnected "natives" and the parvenus. Someday the history of the years since 1985 in Russia will be written not in terms of programs and parties, which exist primarily in the journalistic accounts of them, but in terms of the stunning influx of outsiders into Moscow's elite circles.

The newcomers, whatever their ostensible political ideology, acquired fancy Moscow apartments and the lifetime use of state dachas; and they did whatever it took to get their children into the right schools, or to set themselves up in "private" business. Yet even the highest ranked provincials in Moscow are nothing compared with the capital's natives, because they lack the extensive familial, academic, and professional networks that transgress ministerial boundaries and outlast the rule of individuals. Formal office in Russia means little without cronyism and clientelism.

STEPHEN KOTKIN is director of Russian studies at Princeton University and the author of a forthcoming book on the Soviet collapse, 1970–2000.

FIRST PERSON:
AN ASTONISHINGLY FRANK SELF-PORTRAIT
by Vladimir Putin
with Natalya Gevorkian, Natalya Timakova, and Andrei Kolsenikov
translated by Catherine Fitzpatrick
(Public Affairs, 207 pp., $15)

YELTSIN:
A REVOLUTIONARY LIFE
by Leon Aron
(St. Martin's Press, 934 pp., $35)

RUSSIA'S POLITICS OF UNCERTAINTY
by Mary McAuley
(Cambridge University Press, 351 pp., cloth $69.95, paper $24.95)

PROVINTSIAL
[A PROVINCIAL]
by Boris Nemtsov
(Vagrius, 149 pp.)

In a system in which economics is politics, and politics is intrigue, Moscow's insiders, looking back over Boris Yeltsin's presidency, speak with surprise less about the triumph of democracy or the collapse of communism than about the absence of an enduring power group from Yeltsin's home base in the Urals. Leonid Brezhnev, a protégé of Khrushchev from Dnepropetrovsk in eastern Ukraine, brought an enormous "tail" with him to Moscow, including Konstantin Chernenko. But Yeltsin—like Mikhail Gorbachev, who was from southern Stavropol province—did not implant his own people throughout the Moscow apparat. This, the insiders say, partly explains the practical limits to their vast nominal powers, such as Yeltsin's authoritarian constitution of 1993, which he found himself unable to enforce. During Yeltsin's long reign, when the apparatchiks began to feel their oats like never before, the one outside group that managed to secure a permanent place inside the corridors of central power hailed from St. Petersburg. Now they are giddy with success. Vladimir Putin is one of them.

Putin has now been inaugurated, and presented with Russia's umpteenth economic plan prepared by the latest "team of reform economists." Readers may wonder not only why all the previous reform plans went awry, but also why, in his nine months as prime minister, acting president, and president-elect, Putin did little more than appropriate the initiatives that he inherited, such as the Chechen war, and stall. The answer is that, far from ruling the country, Putin has had his hands full figuring out how to subordinate the apparatus of power that is closest to the president: the Kremlin and the government. If Putin succeeds in this formidable challenge, he might then try taming the million-plus army of federal functionaries (which needs to be reduced, for the survival of the country, by at least 50 percent, with the remainder somehow transformed into a civil service). And there is

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also the matter of the non-functioning Russian federation, in which Moscow fails to meet its budgetary and infrastructural obligations, and elected regional leaders flout federal laws as they ruthlessly concentrate property and power in the local executive-gang.

In sum, the Russian state is even less reformed than the time-warped heavy-industrial Russian economy, which is the other principal inheritance from the Soviet Union. Russia's dysfunctional state apparatus is the world's biggest parasite. It has a self-serving culture that is inimical not just to the tasks of regulating a market society, but also to the commands of any would-be authoritarian ruler. Voters and commentators may hope for, or fear, that Putin will be a Russian Pinochet; but Putin—even after promoting a few dozen loyal St. Petersburg school chums and FSB (Federal Security Service) associates to significant posts—has limited levers of power at his disposal. The recalcitrance of the "leftist" Duma has been diminished by the parliamentary elections in 1999 and by Putin's adroit maneuvering (though a tax overhaul and legalization of land privatization still looms). The Duma's histrionics have always paled in comparison with the dithering and the smothering of any presidential or governmental action by the competing client-patronage webs of what in Russian is known as the *chinovnichestvo*, or "the slimy world of officialdom." Ironically, Russians and Russia-watchers continue to look to the Russian state and its leader to solve the country's problems. But how is the state going to solve the country's problem when the state *is* the country's problem?

IT IS MORE than seven hundred pages long, but Leon Aron's biography of Boris Yeltsin does not tell who came to power along with Yeltsin, and therefore it cannot explain who remains in power after Yeltsin. Nor does Aron explain the new institutions that took shape under Yeltsin. Instead Aron minutely details the scary views and actions of the anti-democratic opposition to Yeltsin. He also celebrates Yeltsin's anti-Communism and his support for electoral democracy, the market, and integration with the West—all worth celebrating, and all downplayed by Yeltsin's many unrealistic critics. But Aron, quoting sober commentators who invoke tough choices and the lesser evil, elevates Yeltsin to the status of history's greatest democratic leaders.

What emerges from Aron's important book is an infirm hero who rises from his sickbed for bouts of inconclusive "reform" and to hold the Communists at bay. In the presidential elections in 1996, Aron notes, the Kremlin's strategy for overcoming a low single-digit approval rating was to frame the vote as a stark choice between Yeltsin and a return to communism. Aron's biography, like Yeltsin's victory, testifies to the enormous success of that framing. Never mind that even under the odious Communist candidate a return to communism would have been impossible, or that the re-election of an invalid did little to advance the reform cause concretely.

The signal achievement of Aron's biography comes in the early sections about "the Man from Sverdlovsk." He shows us a boy, born in 1931, who takes apart a hand grenade to see what was inside, losing two fingers in the process; and whose nose is disfigured by a board in an inter-village brawl. He shows us the young Yeltsin almost dying of typhus exploring a swampy forest, and hitchhiking across the Soviet Union like a hobo, telling bothersome police that he was heading to his grandmother's house "on Lenin Street" in whatever the next town happened to be. And he shows this same prankster earning entrance to the top-flight Urals Polytechnic University.

In 1955—when Mikhail Gorbachev, at Moscow University's law faculty, was writing a senior thesis on the superiority of socialism over capitalism—Yeltsin wrote his thesis on the construction of coal mines. He then chose to begin his career not as a foreman but as a bricklayer, a truck driver, and a house painter. He got to work early and left late; he battled worker drunkenness; he was enraged when his crew was diverted to build a private garage for the big boss. After a long climb, by sheer force of personality, through the upper ranks of the building trusts, Yeltsin was made party boss of Sverdlovsk province, a strategic industrial territory that produced tanks, aircraft, and nuclear and biological weapons.

As a Brezhnev-era party chief of a major province, Yeltsin excelled at what Aron aptly calls the *bain de foule*, or bathing in the crowd. He rode mass transit conspicuously, appeared live on local television, and met with blue-collar workers and students, whose written questions he spent hours answering. Yeltsin's "favorite routine," Aron writes, "was to glance at a slip of paper calling for the dismissal of an especially incompetent or corrupt official, and then announce, to loud applause: 'Already fired. Next question.'" Ham-handed populism, a widespread resort in the provinces, came naturally to Yeltsin, and he had some economic results to back up the theatrics.

Yegor Ligachev, who was in charge of personnel in Andropov's Kremlin, visited Yeltsin's fief for four days in 1984. In an interview in 1991, Ligachev told me that "of course, I was well-informed about Yeltsin's populist tricks, but I verified that there were achievements" in the province, and "there was a need for new cadres who knew how to work." In 1985, after Gorbachev's elevation to power, Ligachev transferred Yeltsin to Moscow as Central Committee Secretary for Construction. By December, Yeltsin had replaced Viktor Grishin as boss of the Moscow party committee, which included almost the entire Soviet central elite on its rolls.

NOT EVEN SVERDLOVSK was preparation for Moscow. Yeltsin's crowd baths and his public attacks on the perquisites of the elite made him anathema to the powerful apparat. Aron quotes an anonymous letter from the wife of a party official reprinted in Yeltsin's autobiography: "We are the elite, we'll tear the puny sails from your perestroika and you'll never reach the shore." Yeltsin confided to his college friends back home that "I have never been as lonely as in Moscow." In an infamous dust-up with Gorbachev and Ligachev in 1987, he offered his resignation and was humiliatingly purged.

But the more the high-placed Communists attacked him, the higher Yeltsin's star rose with the public. In 1989, Gorbachev introduced a new Congress of People's Deputies, to which Yeltsin was elected in a landslide. Not long thereafter, he showed up soaking wet and bleeding at a police station, claiming to have been thrown off a bridge. The bridge was so high and the water was so shallow that no one could have survived such a fall. "Yeltsin's version was full of contradictions," Aron writes, and leaves it at that. Aleksandr Korzhakov, Yeltsin's bodyguard and bathhouse partner since the move to Moscow, has written—in a nasty and incisive book Aron dismisses—that a depressed Yeltsin had attempted suicide.

Yeltsin survived, of course, to help bury the Soviet Union in 1991 and to abolish Russia's Supreme Soviet for a new parliament in 1993. Aron struggles to depict him as simultaneously conciliatory and decisive. From 1994, when Yeltsin launched the first war in Chechnya, until 2000, even Aron must concede that the president was rarely up to governing. He suffered from back and leg pain as a result of a crash landing in Spain in 1990, and from chest pain as a result of clogged arteries. He washed painkillers down with vodka. In 1995 and 1996, Yeltsin had several major heart attacks and then quintuple bypass surgery. Pneumonia followed.

Aron, recounting one unfortunate development after another, writes that Yeltsin "cannot be absolved of responsibility." He compares Yeltsin to Lincoln and de Gaulle, explaining that he was neither a

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great thinker nor a master administrator, but he made choices and shouldered responsibility that would have crushed others. And yet, Aron concludes, "the flaws in the political system Yeltsin has bequeathed to Russia are great and many." Overall, it is a fair judgment (except for the comparisons); but Aron neglects to outline the features of that new political system.

When and how did the sprawling Presidential Administration arise and come to take over the old Central Committee city-within-a-city? Who works in the Kremlin, and what do they do? What does the Kremlin Property Office manage, and how did it acquire its breathtaking holdings and powers? What is the balance of power between the Kremlin and the government, or the rump military, or the successors to the KGB? How many ministries does Russia have, what do they do, who staffs them, and how are they hired? How are Russian regions governed? How are powers shared, or not shared, between the regions and the federal center? In short, what has changed since Soviet times in the institutions and methods of governing?

Perhaps such questions are beyond the scope of a biography. Still, by reducing everything to anti-Communism, and to a commitment to the market and to the West—and by making these commitments into the sole measures by which Yeltsin's historical achievement may be measured—Aron sidesteps a multitude of matters that are critical for an informed evaluation not only of Yeltsin's legacy, but also of the prospects for Russia.

II.

TWO-THIRDS OF the way into Aron's book, Yeltsin's presidency suddenly comes to resemble the Brezhnev-era Kremlin: "neglectful of policy-making, rife with intrigues and infighting, obsessed with the paraphernalia of power and rank, cloaked in secrecy and pomp, slack with incompetence and tainted by corruption." How did that happen? Aron writes only that poor Yeltsin seemed "as if seized by senility," and that his "hunting, eating, drinking and fishing buddies, as well as sauna companions," were the worst kind of people. But how did such scoundrels come to occupy a privileged place in what became an inner court?

Aron does not say. Korzhakov, the bodyguard who oversaw the state during Yeltsin's extended sicknesses up to 1996, makes his first appearance on page 440, and arrives in the narrative out of nowhere. Valentin Yumashev, whom Korzhakov bought into the Kremlin to write Yeltsin's memoirs—and who, on that pretext, dominated access to the isolated president—receives a single innocuous mention, on page 666. Boris Berezovsky—who was introduced to Yeltsin by Yumashev, to arrange publication of the Yeltsin memoirs that Yumashev wrote—receives brief and dismissive treatment. From Aron's account, then, it is impossible to understand the patronage politics of Moscow, and the rise of Putin.

Everyone loves to exaggerate Berezovsky's influence, Berezovsky especially. He has nothing near the wealth, or the sway over the economy of Russia and the neighboring countries, commanded by Rem Vyakhirev, the CEO of the monster gas monopoly. But as Putin discovered, Berezovsky maintains an office inside the Kremlin (in building 14), even though he has no state executive post. Like many others, but with far greater skill and clamor, Berezovsky has systematized the rampant "privatizing" of officeholders, spinning a "private" web throughout state institutions. His power derives not from the usual school connections or state employment connections, but from the ill-gotten ownership, or more often the de facto control, of major cash-generating businesses that he uses to buy important people. He also gathers, or manufactures, compromising dossiers on people, often at astronomical cost. And he has also acquired, or come to control, major media. Countless journalists and image people, current and former state officials, top financial and eavesdropping types in and out of government, work for Berezovsky not simply because he pays good money, but also because he keeps their enemies off-balance, and because he (and his enemies) tirelessly publicize his activities, real and imagined. The incessant talk about Berezovsky's power is itself power.

IF ONE SIDE of the Yeltsin-era inner court—the Korzhakov legacy, or Yumashev and Berezovsky—is barely present in Aron's book, the other side of that court, which Aron calls "the young reformers," is mischaracterized. Aron lionizes Egor Gaidar, a specialist on the socialist reforms of Hungary and Yugoslavia, whom Yeltsin trusted "more than almost anyone else and often treated with utterly uncharacteristic, almost fatherly tenderness." In fact, Yeltsin's search for a surrogate son—he has two daughters—runs throughout his presidency, though it is not analyzed by Aron. At first the role fell to Gaidar, but the longer-lasting Yumashev displaced him. Before that, however, Gaidar managed to bring Anatoly Chubais to Moscow.

Chubais was a Leningrad specialist on management with whom Gaidar had worked under Gorbachev. Americans liked to delude themselves that Chubais's enormous power derived from his good working relationship with the IMF's Stanley Fisher and the bosses at Treasury. The truth is that, as in the case of Berezovsky, Chubais's power flowed from his close ties to Yeltsin's younger daughter and confidante Tatyana Dyachenko; and, unlike Berezovsky, Chubais had frequent access to the President himself. (Yes, another surrogate son.) In contrast to the politically less-adept Gaidar, moreover, Chubais understood how to consolidate his good fortune into enduring power.

It was not simply that Chubais was the "privatization tsar," and so collaborated in the creation of flim-flam financial-industrial groups with whom he exchanged favors. More important was the fact that, as a consequence of his successful management of Yeltsin's re-election campaign, Chubais was named Chief of the Presidential Administration. He proved to be an iron-fisted apparatchik. He mercilessly attacked ensconced patronage groups and jammed planeloads of loyal Leningraders (by then St. Petersburgers) into the Moscow agencies. He even managed to oust Korzhakov from the Kremlin.

Chubais's main partner in the re-election campaign, Boris Berezovsky, was another matter. In retaliation for losing the "auction" in 1997 of a 25 percent stake in Russia's telecommunications monopoly, Berezovsky orchestrated a scandal over a $90,000 advance for a book that Chubais never wrote. Still, in leaving government Chubais wheedled Yeltsin into naming him the virtually unremovable head of Russia's United Power monopoly, which like the gas monopoly wields blackmail powers over the government. Moreover, the Chubais St. Petersburg clientele, like the private Berezovsky network, maintains connections to the Kremlin and crisscrosses all the key Russian state agencies. These two competing insider groups filled the vacuum in Kremlin politics that opened up because Yeltsin did not have his own people from the Urals; they were the groups, unsurprisingly, preoccupied with guiding the succession. Putin can try to decapitate these networks and claim them as his own. Or, like Yeltsin, he can try to pit them against each other, thereby seeming to preside over them, while simultaneously scheming to elevate some of the myriad lesser groupings.

YET ANOTHER "young reformer" whom Aron and many others misinterpret is Boris Nemtsov; and his story, too, is directly relevant to Putin's. In 1997, the thirty-something governor of Nizhny Novgorod was appointed to the federal government, a move that Aron

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adduces as a demonstration of Yeltsin's renewed commitment to reform. Aron writes that Nemtsov took pride in a decree forbidding the central apparat to acquire foreign cars for state business, and mandating that they use domestic cars. Never mind that Nizhny Novgorod is a leader in automobile production. Aron also neglects to mention that state officials nominally subordinated to Nemtsov openly ridiculed the order.

Nemstov's brief run in the government made him a laughingstock. It brought no lasting reform of any substance, by Nemtsov's own admission. His autobiography, *A Provincial*, written around the time he was named First Deputy Prime Minister—and Yeltsin's likely successor—opens with Nemtsov recalling how a gypsy once told his mother that "her son would be world famous. My mother laughed heartily." So would you, after reading these scribblings.

Nemtsov, whom Aron calls "an intellectual," writes that in office he committed "many brainless acts." But "I forgive myself a lot," he explains. "Sometimes I'm ashamed of things I do, but I wouldn't call this self-hatred." He offers reflections on censorship (it is bad) and on reading (it is good). He says he first met Yeltsin during the president's visit to Nizhny Novgorod in August, 1994. "Precisely at that time, at that meeting, he suggested that I become the next president of Russia. A joke, of course. A clown's act. But all the same, this joke acquired wide resonance."

When Yeltsin suddenly dismissed Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin in March 1998, he nominated as his replacement Sergei Kiriyenko, a bright political unknown who had been a lower-ranking official under Nemtsov in Nizhny. In Moscow, Kiriyenko, like Netmsov, completely lacked a web of clients. Government officials rarely bothered to follow his directives. Yumashev addressed him with the informal "you" (*ty*), and Kiriyenko, the Prime Minister, responded with the formal (*vy*). He was mocked as a Kinder-Surprise, the brand name of an egg-shaped chocolate and Russian slang for the child of an unwanted pregnancy.

In 1999, Kiriyenko, along with Nemtsov and Gaidar, founded a political "party" of "young reformers" and got elected to the Duma. But Nemtsov writes that, whereas in Nizhny as governor he felt "like a fish in water," in Moscow "it was a different level for me." He felt overwhelmed by "the number of actors, the number of factors influencing the situation." In Moscow, he concludes, "it is not possible to do anything productive," adding, by the way, that he "dislikes shopping" and "takes delight in women." His memoir includes his favorite joke:

> Ivan [the Russian everyman] is preparing to go to Paris on a business trip. His wife says to him, "Vanya, buy me a French bra." He says, "Manya, I'd buy you one, but you have no chest. What's the point?" "Well," she responds, "I buy you briefs."

Nemtsov's autobiography—he wrote it himself—rather resembles Kiriyenko's three-month premiership. It, too, is a weightless thing. Yet it can profitably be read as part of the answer to the question of how Vladimir Putin became Boris Yeltsin's successor.

III.

Among those who were considered over the years to follow in Yeltsin's footsteps, Vladimir Putin stood out—way out. He was of the new generation, but he was not childlike. He was competent at whatever job he was assigned. He never displayed ambition openly, let alone a shameless grasping for power. He was loyal to the president, but his loyalty was free of sycophancy. He spoke the vocabulary of patriotism, and he seemed to mean it. He did not use foul language and he did not abuse alcohol or a microphone.

Putin worked for years as the number-two man in St. Petersburg, which had been the country's "democratic" stronghold, and then quietly rode the Chubais-led St. Petersburg wave into the corridors of central power. He was also from the one institution—the KGB—that Russian voters saw as the least enmeshed in the great corruption bacchanalia. Putin was not personally linked to substantial privatized state property or to offshore bank accounts. He was the anti-Yeltsin without being anti-Yeltsin.

He appeared, in other words, as the humbly reliable type who is called upon, after a down-home Russian-style excess, to clean up the mess, and who does the job without complaint or self-promotion. Putin was the inside candidate (even if he beat out others for that role); but he won a legitimate election. Unlike the case in Armenia, Georgia, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Ukraine, and other countries that surround Russia, which the United States supports almost as if they can do no wrong, the Russian elections were not rigged. Real opposition candidates were neither jailed nor murdered. No major fake opposition candidates were promoted to give the false appearance of choice. There was some press coverage of opposition speeches, and even some unfavorable coverage of Putin.

Putin opportunistically laid claim to the generals' Second Chechen War, support for which skyrocketed after the highly suspicious and still-unsolved bombings in Moscow. (They might come to haunt Putin's presidency.) As an incumbent, he had very many things in his favor, including the support of state television. But the official media's deflation of the pre-election "outsider" favorite, Yevgeny Primakov, proved easy, given Primakov's advanced age, and his blunder of making his anti-corruption image vulnerable by his alliance with the Moscow city boss Yuri Luzhkov. Putin also had the advantage over the old KGB boss of himself coming out of the KGB, and of cleverly appropriating the Primakov script: uncorrupt, patriotic, and reticent. (His inscrutability allowed people to see what they wanted to see in him.) Still, Putin won the vote for three basic reasons: the Communist candidate Gennady Ziuganov, the liberal candidate Grigory Yavlinsky, and the *faux* nationalist candidate Vladimir Zhirinovsky. An election, after all, is not about an ideal choice, but a choice among actual people.

The Russian edition of *First Person: An Astonishingly Frank Self-Portrait by Russia's President Vladimir Putin* bore the more modest subtitle of *Conversations with Vladimir Putin*. It is the product of six interviews conducted by Natalya Gevorkyan, an accomplished journalist with Russia's leading daily newspaper, *Kommersant* (which is owned by Boris Berezovsky). Gevorkyan also interviewed Putin's wife, grade-school teachers, and family friends. (During the interviews, a male journalist, Andrei Kolesnikov, was asked by Putin's people to be added to the process; and a third journalist, Natalaya Timakova, is credited in the book.) Excerpts from the book were published in *Kommersant* and in its weekly magazine *Vlast* (or *The Powers That Be*); but some "excerpts" that showed Putin in a particularly unflattering light were missing from the Russian book, and they have been restored in the rush-job English translation. (I have emended some of the quotations below.) Gevorkyan told me that some statements by Putin were ordered suppressed even before the *Kommersant* digest, and have not seen the light of day in any form. In any event, the book is part spin and part journalistic interrogation, and it is most revealing.

The son of two factory workers, Putin, who comes from St. Petersburg, the most proudly Western city in Russia, was born in 1952. Which is to say, he missed the purges and the war. The future Russian president grew up in a rat-infested communal apartment wracked by kitchen warfare among families. He says he "was a hooligan, not a Pioneer [Communist cub

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scout]." His main ambition was to become king of the 'hood. He took up boxing, and had his nose broken. Next came wrestling, and then judo. He went to practice everyday. He didn't smoke. "If I hadn't got involved in sports," he says, "I'm not sure how my life would have turned out. It was sports that dragged me off the streets." One of his teachers says that he showed little interest in girls, though they noticed him.

In all, a tough guy who learned discipline and respect. He studied German. He wanted to be a pilot, then a sailor, and finally a spy. At the age of sixteen, he showed up unsummoned at KGB headquarters in Leningrad and announced that he wanted to join. A grizzled operative supposedly told him that they didn't take "volunteers," but that they recruited army veterans and college graduates, especially law majors. Immediately Putin set his sights on the law department at Leningrad University, and supposedly after a strong senior-year performance he gained one of the coveted slots.

Occupied with judo and his means-to-an-end law studies, Putin waited and waited to be tapped for the KGB. Finally, during his next-to-last year, he says, the operative in charge of university oversight approached him. Pressed by his interviewer about the KGB's sordid past, Putin says that his "notion of the KGB came from romantic spy stories." Calling himself "an utterly successful product of Soviet patriotic education," he praises the work of secret informants, in a passage excised from the Russian edition; and he makes a distinction between those who inform for money or grudges and those who help the state out of "idealistic principles." The only principle evident in the book is the principle of state power.

At first Putin worked in the KGB secretariat, and then he moved to "counter-espionage." He had some additional training, spent four and a half years at a desk in Leningrad, and was sent back to Moscow for further study. He says that at the Andropov Institute (or the KGB Academy) a teacher of spy techniques singled him out to be a group leader, owing to his integrity and his sincerity. He married a stewardess and told her falsely that he worked as a regular cop.

In 1985, nine years after joining the KGB, Putin was posted to East Germany. He might have been sent to West Germany, or at least to East Berlin; but he was sent to Dresden, where he and his family lived in a Stasi building. He claims that he gathered political information on NATO—from Dresden. German and Russian press reports have speculated that he worked in industrial espionage. He denies this, pointing out that he had no technical background. He also denies that he kept an eye on the East German party elite, which was resisting Gorbachev's perestroika, though he remarks that he did collect information on "how our partners would react in disarmament talks." He also says he was twice promoted while in East Germany, rising to first deputy assistant of the local KGB chief. In other words, he was a nobody.

COURTESY PUBLIC AFFAIRS

In those days East German shops were relatively full, and beer was plentiful, and Putin gained twenty-five pounds. Then, one day in 1989, an agitated crowd surrounded their building. His boss called Moscow for instructions and got none. They called the local commander of Soviet troops, and he sent over a group of officers who helped to disperse the crowd. But the Berlin Wall soon fell. Ludmila Putin says that the wife of one of their Stasi neighbors cried for a week. "She cried for her lost ideals, for the collapse of everything that she believed in her whole life."

Putin evinces no nostalgia for communism. He concedes that he "regretted that the Soviet Union had lost its position in Europe, although intellectually I understood that a position built on walls and dividers cannot last. But I wanted something different to rise in its place. And nothing different was proposed. That's what hurt. They just dropped everything and threw it away." He remains bitter. "What we did turned out to be unneeded by anyone. Why did we bother to report, recruit, pursue information? In Moscow no one read it. Didn't we warn them about what was coming? Didn't we provide them with recommendations on how to act? No reaction whatsoever. Who likes to work for the circular file? To spend years of one's life—for what?—just to get a salary?" And he continues:

> For example, my friends, who worked in industrial-technical espionage, obtained for several million dollars information about a valuable scientific advance. For our country to develop the science on its own would have cost us billions of dollars. My friends got hold of it, and sent it on to Moscow. There they took and look and said, 'Excellent. Super information. Thanks. We kiss you all. Everyone to be recommended for a medal.' But they didn't even try to use the work. The technical level of industry didn't permit it.

Allowing direct Western investment would have been a better idea.

Before withdrawing from Dresden in January 1990, Putin and his colleagues burned so many files that the furnace broke. Then they went home with their tails between their legs. Offered a post in the central KGB in a collapsing Soviet Union, Putin, who had a wife and two daughters to support, went back to where he started, Leningrad University, to write a doctoral dissertation on international law. He says that he did not leave the KGB and was hired as the university president's deputy for foreign liaison. Soon, an unnamed acquaintance asked him to quit and go to work for the high-profile chairman of the Leningrad City Soviet, Anatoly Sobchak.

"Three photos of me in the KGB," from "First Person" by Vladimir Putin

Putin had once attended Sobchak's lectures at the university. He told Sobchak that he was still in the KGB, but the leading Leningrad "democrat" waived that off. "Screw it," he said. Putin told his KGB boss about the job switch, and offered to

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resign. "Why resign?" he was told. "Go work for Sobchak." He continued to draw his KGB salary, which exceeded what he was paid by the city government. His KGB ties later became a matter of controversy, but Sobchak, who by then was mayor, stood by his loyal deputy. Putin says that he resigned from the KGB during the putsch in August 1991. "Only during the days of the putsch did all my ideals, all the goals I had when I joined the KGB, collapse." He also observes that the putsch organizers had the right idea, which was to save the Union, but that they used the wrong methods and thereby hastened the Union's demise. One wonders how this lesson applies to the Russian Federation.

In Sobchak's administration in St. Petersburg, Putin passed six years trying to figure out how to foster and regulate a market economy out of the grim Soviet bequeathal. It was an education. To bring order to the unregulated gambling businesses in St. Petersburg, for example, he traveled to Hamburg to study its supervised red-light district. Back home, however, the financial reporting procedures that Putin tried to enforce with a government-imposed monopoly in gambling proved toothless. "While we were estimating their profits and deciding where to allocate the funds—to develop the city's businesses or support the social sector—they were laughing at us and showing us only losses. Ours was a classic mistake made by people encountering the free market for the first time." The result was the widespread criminalization of the market economy.

In 1996, after Sobchak lost a brutal campaign for governor to a different deputy, Putin resigned. He was out of work for months, during which time he finally finished a modest country house that he was having built for six years. Unfortunately a fire in the first-floor sauna burned the house to the ground. The firemen came, and there was a lake nearby, but Putin says that they had no hose. Russia's "rebirth" was coming to look no less ignominious than the Soviet collapse.

Suddenly, in August 1996, after his fifteen years in the KGB and his almost six years in city government, and after his little country house had all gone up in smoke, the unemployed Putin landed a top job in Yeltsin's presidential administration. He reports that he made the rounds of the numerous St. Petersburg officials in high posts in Moscow. Almost all of them owed their positions to Chubais, who had just been made head of the presidential administration; but Putin makes it seem that Chubais attempted to block his move to Moscow. This might be an unsubtle effort to distance himself from an unpopular figure, someone he calls "a very good administrator" but "a Bolshevik in his methods" who "has a poor credit history with the population, unfortunately."

Whatever the truth, Putin was named deputy chief of the Kremlin property office under Pavel Borodin, who employed more than 100,000 people and owned or managed property valued at around $600 billion, including all the government dachas distributed to, or taken from, the Moscow elite. Not much need for Yeltsinesque "crowd bathing" or populist attacks on elite perquisites in that post. Once in Moscow, the subservient Putin's star ascended abruptly.

In 1997, he became chief of the Presidential Administration's main control department (or the inspector general), which collected files on corruption. In 1998, he was named first deputy chief of the Presidential Administration responsible for Russia's regions, traveled the country, and met the governors. That same year, he was named head of the FSB (the domestic successor to the KGB). In spring 1999, when Yeltsin was contemplating dismissing Evgeny Primakov as prime minister, there were rumors that the post would go to Putin. Instead it went to Sergei Stepashin, another Chubais man from St. Petersburg; but after three months Stepashin was cashiered. Elections to the Duma were coming up, and Stepashin failed to forestall an alliance of the "opposition" (Primakov and Luzhkov), or to form a powerful alternative coalition. Also, a Chechen warlord named Shamil Basaev, evidently encouraged by a Moscow-controlled provocateur named Nadirshakh Khachilaev, invaded neighboring Dagestan.

In August 1999, Yeltsin announced the elevation of Putin on television, and proclaimed the new prime minister his successor as Russian president. The entire Moscow elite took the surprise announcement as Putin's political death sentence. They were wrong, of course; but winning a presidential election against a dullard and two egomaniacs, as well as a miscalculating septuagenarian who chose not to run, was but the beginning. Compared with Moscow, "St. Petersburg is provincial, at least politically," President Putin now states.

IV.

From the perspective of Russia's eighty-nine regions, Mary McAuley poses the question of whether 1991 really constituted a revolution. With the end of the old rules of closed politics, a new era of uncertainty opened in the early 1990s. But by the time the "soviets," or Communist-era legislatures, gave way to "dumas" in late 1993, Russian regions had experienced a re-aggrandizement of local executives, whose power was not grounded in social constituencies even though they submitted to elections. The Communist party ceased to be the ubiquitous shadow to the state, but most Soviet-era personnel endured, along with many earlier practices. "If earlier an unaccountable elite ruled a mute society," McAuley explains in her admirable book, "now a partially accountable elite ruled a noisy one. Both authority and repression had gone, to be replaced by freedom and lawlessness."

McAuley, who runs the Ford Foundation office in Moscow, offers a rare comparative analysis, based on the local press and on her own interviews, of six well-chosen Russian regions: Krasnodar, Perm, Tomsk, St. Petersburg, Tatarstan, and Sakha (Yakutia). In red-belt Krasnodar, the old Communist party elites lost scarcely a step after 1991, even if their intrigues were flushed out into the open. A national-populist rose to power locally, and he maintained his position not by writ of Moscow, but by doling out goodies and pitting rival political "clans" against each other. Tomsk, by contrast, was convulsed by a strong democratic movement in the early 1990s; but by 1994 the pluralist politics of Tomsk had faded. The reconstituted Tomsk executive, an amalgam of some outsiders and many insiders, ran roughshod over the legislature and spent its time fighting over the spoils of power. A similarly unresponsive and expanding executive formed in Perm province, although there they "skipped" the interlude of democratic movements and went directly to assembling and dividing the spoils of office.

For Krasnodar and Perm, and even for Tomsk, McAuley writes, "the re-establishment of executive dominance can be attributed to the continuation of old practices by incumbent politicians, by the weakness of the democratic opposition, or by presidential moves against [legislatures]." In St. Petersburg, however, the political community was far more galvanized. St. Petersburg's democrats dominated both the executive and the legislature, unlike in Moscow, where the parliament (or the Supreme Soviet) and the president went to war with each other. The St. Petersburg soviet was one of the most professional in the country, but it, too, never managed to make policy effectively, and the city failed to create lasting organizations founded on popular support.

Many blame Boris Yeltsin's abolition

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of the treacherous national legislature in 1993, an act eagerly replicated by executives in numerous regions. But McAuley notes that executive supremacy in St. Petersburg emerged "before presidential intervention." She points to the personality of Anatoly Sobchak, the head of the St. Petersburg executive, and persuasively portrays him as autocratic, vain, fearful of competition, incompetent, gratuitously offensive, and impetuous. She also shows that Sobchak, who was a law professor, occasionally contravened the law in his war with his opponents.

STILL, MCAULEY ARGUES that the explanation for "the failure of representative assemblies to hold their ground, and the inability of political movements or parties to sustain themselves or attract a following," is broader. She alludes to the movement of officials from the Communist party to the elected soviets in the years between 1989 and 1993, and then from the soviets to the new regional executive bodies, which smoothly established themselves in Soviet-era Communist party headquarters, which had the best offices and the best communication equipment. The executive's management of huge property transfers also undermined constitutional provisions about the role of the legislature. The legislatures, for their part, became bogged down in fruitless debate and set out to acquire for themselves some of the perquisites of power, which were distributed by the local executive.

Did anybody expect anything different? The answer is that almost everybody did, including McAuley. She has now concluded that democratic politics requires more than anti-communism, and that democracy must be institutionalized. This seems true, indeed obviously true; but McAuley does an effective job elaborating it. "For democracy to work," she writes, "people need to be composed of distinct political constituencies." Politically, privatization encouraged the formation of interest groups, but it did not encourage the formation of effective national parties.

McAuley also identifies another problem, which she nicely calls the "the absence of identity-making ideologies." She points out that democracy came to mean many contradictory things, and this led to confusion. She could have added that communism, even if it was discredited ideologically for most people, persisted for them in many forms, including the organization of communities around enterprises and "free" housing. Soviet-era apartments may be the main reason that so many Russians live below the official poverty level and yet somehow survive. Most Russians who managed to obtain apartments under communism still pay only nominal rents and fees far below world prices for utilities. This inherited "safety net" is simultaneously an obstacle to further marketization (inhibiting the creation of a national labor market), and the firewall against monumental catastrophe. The result, as McAuley shows, is that Russia is a capitalist-communist mishmash.

MCAULEY ALSO RESCUES the much-misunderstood ethnic factor in Russian politics from the conventional overemphasis on separatism. The Russian Federation, which is around 80 percent ethnically Russian, has thirty-three of its own ethno-territorial units. Of the latter, twelve are so-called autonomous districts, and twenty-one are ethnic republics. Only in six ethnic republics, however, does the titular nation account for more than half the population. Thus Tatars are a minority within Tatarstan. In fact, three-quarters of the five million Tatars in Russia do not live in Tatarstan.

McAuley examines how the Tatar leadership, goaded by a strong nationalist movement, pushed for independence. But Tatarstan had nowhere to go: the republic was deeply inside Russia, and it did not have a demographic majority or support from the outside world. All sixteen Tatar institutions of higher education offered instruction in Russian, and Tatar-language programs occupied just a four-hour slot on local TV.

Another ethnic republic, Sakha (Yakutia), also had a minority nationality. But Sakha, unlike Tatarstan, remained loyal to Moscow even while it asserted its own "autonomy," eyeing local property. By 1994, however, Sakha's relations with Moscow were very similar to Tatarstan's. Both were part of Russia. Both had increased control over resources on their territories. And both saw local elites consolidate their rule in strong executives.

Across Russia, then, "the party of power" emerged as dominant, in some cases with the involvement of competing alternatives, in other cases without. Moreover, an overwhelming majority of the elected chief executives of Russian regions and ethnic republics re-emerged from the pre-1991 political system. In many cases they had never really been eclipsed. McAuley misses an opportunity to analyze the local patronage politics inside these patterns, but her central finding—that politics in "democratic" St. Petersburg came to resemble politics in "Communist" Krasnodar—is very sobering. It cannot be explained by the usual invocation of the baneful influence of Moscow's robber barons. Nor can the blame fall primarily on the Kremlin, since the triumph of an executive-dominated, winner-take-all patronage system, rooted in control over property allocation, took place all over the country with minimal, or no, prodding. Indeed, the Moscow story presents a variant, on a much larger scale, of the regional processes that McAuley describes, except that Moscow is nominally responsible for the whole country.

Russia's federation is broken. The problem is less ethnic-based separatism, even in the violent Causcasus, than the failure of the state to function as a state. Commentators speak of "decentralization," but Russia has become a collection of eighty-nine highly centralized and largely disconnected fiefs. Their relations with Moscow are semi-regulated by bilateral treaties or separate understandings, many of which contradict the Russian constitution. Their relations with their constituents are regulated by nothing. Regional executives must submit to elections, but they use candidate registration, state budget funds, the tax police, and other executive levers to intimidate or destroy potential opponents. Only disaffected patronage groups, sometimes aided by powerful outsiders, can dislodge a leader or a ruling group. Of course, regional executives, like the Kremlin, no longer completely control the press and all property, but that does not stop them from trying. They collaborate with regional "robber barons," who are indistinguishable from the executive power, to extort or confiscate revenue-generating businesses, to subsidize friendly media, and to buy off or to choke off hostile media. In sum, the regional administrations behave like deadly parasites. But under Putin, the grand parasite in Moscow, the central state, wants to reassert its unreformed rule over the misbehaving regional executives.

V.

ON JANUARY 22, 1999, NTV, Russia's highly professional and only fully private television network, held a gala fifth-anniversary celebration at the Radison-Slavyanskaya Hotel in Moscow. The capital's internecine inner circles generally do not gather together, beyond an occasional major theater or film premiere, or the narrower state receptions in the Kremlin; the central elite, just as in Soviet times, socializes mostly in small groups, making discreet visits to the dachas of trusted allies. At the NTV celebration, however, with an open bar and almost no one drinking in style, all eyes surveyed the intoxicating scene of court society. "Oh my, look who's here! I haven't seen you in ages," said one recently promoted Kremlin insider to a man in an

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ill-fitting expensive suit. "Did you survive the arrival of the new minister over at the Ministry?" "No," came the reply from the excess cloth, "I was reduced [fired]. Now I'm a department head on the Presidential Administration." And so it goes. Ministers come and go. Governments come and go. Now even presidents come and go. But the apparatchik merely shifts, this way and that, temporarily sideways or even downwards, keeping his head low and watching his back, and cultivating his network.

Moscow's executive and legislative apparatuses, in the year and four months since NTV's party, have added yet another 100,000 people, and nobody is better off as a result—except, of course, the new functionaries. Russia's state gets bigger and bigger, and weaker and weaker. Vladimir Putin likes to remind Russians that he is not just the heir of Boris Yeltsin, but also the heir of Yuri Andropov. He is right, but he neglects to mention that in 1982 Andropov assembled a team, led by Mikhail Gorbachev, to combat Brezhnev-era sloth and corruption—and that, once in power, they ended up removing the remaining obstacles to official malfeasance, which flourished in the Yeltsin era.

The possibility that Putin will preside over a great revival of the KGB or the Russian military exists only in the minds of the huge population of deluded generals and apocalyptic liberals. Putin's show of sometimes resorting to the former KGB is an act of obvious desperation. He entered the once-mighty organization precisely when its top analysts began secretly warning the Politburo about Soviet vulnerabilities and urging orderly retrenchment. His main life-experience has been one of collapse: first of the Soviet Union and its empire, then of the democratic and market transformation in St. Petersburg. What's next? Putin wants to arrest the ongoing decline, which threatens far more than Russia. As police in ski masks raid the debt-ridden parent company of the somewhat critical (and extremely valuable) NTV, Putin insists that he stands for "effective authority," not authoritarianism. Either way, it is hard to see where his leverage will come from, and how the dysfunctional Russian state is going to transform itself.

CONSIDERING THE ENORMITY of the tasks and the less democratic, less market-oriented record of most other post-Soviet republics, Russia has done well. Still, Leon Aron's rehabilitation of the wrongly dismissed Yeltsin years is not fully borne out. Russia still needs its de Gaulle, though it seems unlikely to get one. As post-Yeltsin Russia continues to struggle with the Soviet collapse and the Soviet inheritance, it is more and more urgent to ask what, if anything, the West can do.

The answer is that the West can do quite a bit—if the West finally begins to think and act selfishly. President Clinton, following his push to win Permanent Normal Trade Relations with China, arrives in Moscow in early June. Despite the Chechen fiasco and Putin's sweeping inactivity on almost all other fronts until now, his statements about policy have *pleased Western governments eager for a* new "partner" in Russia; and the Start II ratification vote in the Duma certainly seems auspicious. But the potential for another round of mutual disillusionment is great.

Far too much power is attributed by American policymakers to Putin, who are thereby repeating their pattern with Yeltsin. Far too little is still being made of the special challenges that Russia presents. If an aggrieved Russia were suddenly to sell or to give away several beakers of anthrax to the North Koreans, what would the United States do? Expand NATO into Romania? If Russian scientists and engineers were suddenly instructed to profitably make Iran, or Iraq, a nuclear power like France, what would the United States do? Cut off irrelevant IMF loans to Russia that have totaled less than what was loaned to Mexico or South Korea? Start World War III and incur the annihilation of the Bay Area and New York? Russia has 40,000 metric tons of chemical weapons. (Remember the chaos caused by a single vial of sarin gas released in the Tokyo subway.)

AMERICAN POLICY TOWARD Russia is not geared to furthering American interests. Russia should *have never gotten "aid" in the form of loans* to a parasitic state that are now owed by its people. Nor does Russia need any more advice from "proconsul Strobe" on how to become a democracy. Rather, Russia needs today what it has always needed: massive direct foreign investment by cynical multinational corporations. It is the responsibility of the Russian government to solicit private foreign capital on the massive scale required.

Still, the United States should welcome, rather than reflexively resist, Russia's inevitable economic re-integration with its former possessions, and the transformation of the CIS into another kind of NAFTA dominated by the region's largest economy. And the United States could offer favorable access to American markets for value-added Russian imports. In other words, it should be an objective of American policy not just to refrain from the delusion of micromanaging Russian politics and policies, but to stand back and allow the ruthlessness of the world-market economy to compel hard choices inside Russia. Self-interest, not hectoring or wishful thinking, should be the driving force for both sides.

Russia also does not need insincere stroking for its unrecoverable superpower status or the humiliation of phony "partnership," but formal integration into a new architecture. Russia has no chance of joining NATO or the European Union, and *it will not become a part of the American-Japanese alliance* or even the Pacific Rim economy. Yet a Russia allied with no one, and inside nothing, and apparently surrounded makes everyone insecure. If Bismarck were alive, he would know what to do.

PREPOSTEROUS AS IT might sound, the United States, with Germany, Europe's great power, should offer to form a tripartite political-defense alliance with Russia, locking in existing borders in the former Soviet lands, compelling a restructuring of the Russian military establishment, transcending the lingering idea of a solo Russian sphere of influence, and ensuring tight control over Russia's vast doomsday complex. The *threat from Russia is not aggression; it is* crippling weakness, and Russia's isolation and frustration.

President Clinton, before leaving office, should point the way toward what should have been done long ago: making Russia policy look more like China policy (Russia certainly deserves a China-like policy more than China does), while also taking advantage of democratic Germany's power, and far more aggressively preempting the staggering harm that could come from the mischievous sale or leakage of *even small portions of the unique Soviet*-era arsenal of nuclear, chemical, and perhaps biological weapons. The model should be the enormous success of Nunn-Lugar and the administration's various nuclear cities initiatives, which have engaged a broad Russian scientific public and generated mutually beneficial programs and enormous goodwill, rather than the IMF-delegated escapade with a group of "young reformers." Just as the prospect of membership in the European Union (or NATO) affected internal developments in Slovakia or Hungary, so a real alliance could make the real reform of the parasitic Russian state seem advantageous to Russia's self-indulgent elites. Regardless, the Pentagon could shift the astronomical sums for new weapons systems still being developed to fight the Soviet menace over to a program that actually increases American security. The Cold War would finally be over. ■

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Species and Genius

By THOMAS W. LAQUEUR

Linnaeus: Nature and Nation by Lisbet Koerner

(Harvard University Press, 320 pp., $39.95)

NOT MANY PEOPLE will have given much thought to the question of how each of the millions upon millions of species that inhabit our world came to have its own universally recognized and unique name: some 300,000 kinds of plants alone, and nary a repetition among them. Walking in any public garden, we read on a little black plastic tag that the species in front of which we happened to stop is known as a Japanese pagoda tree to some and as a Chinese scholar tree to others, but really—definitively—it is the *Sophora japonica*. No confusion there.

History is brought to a point in Latin binomial names. The Greeks called one particular shrub *hypereikon* because it grows under heather (*hypo*, under; *ereike*, heather); and the Crusaders used it as a styptic and associated it with the blood of St. John, because its sap turned red when the stem was broken; and in the Middle Ages the mad or the bewitched inhaled the vapor of its crushed leaves or drunk their essence as an infusion. It became known as an astringent, a diuretic, a sedative. It was "amber," to some; and to others it was "Crammock," "grace of God," and "penny John," and this only in English. It is a kind of "wort," from the now-archaic term for any useful plant, which this one clearly was: hence the St. John's Wort in modern health-food stores and in the pharmacopoeias of generations of healers. But finally the name game must give way to science, and when all is said and done we can be assured that the plant in question, whatever it has been called, is the species *perforatum* of the genus *hypercicacea*, the large (200-member) genus of deciduous shrubs and herbaceous perennials with simple opposite or whorled leaves and many-stamened flowers. It is *Hypercicacea perforatum*, or *H. perforatum* for short.

We owe this internationally recognized system of binomial names—a genus name and a species name, not only for plants but for all living things—to the Swedish naturalist Carl Linnaeus (1707–1778), who is the subject of Lisbet Koerner's brilliant, beautifully crafted, and unsettling book. Linnaeus's scheme was one of those strokes of rationalizing genius that imposed logic and consistency where before there had been disorder and confusion. And even more important in the history of botany is the Linnaean system for assigning each species to a genus and each genus to one of twenty-four classes.

The gold standard of classification had always been some sort of so-called "natural system," by which we could arrange the multiplicity of creation so as to reflect some deep underlying order in the universe. Such a man-made classification would more or less correspond to the divine plan. Linnaeus and many others tried to construct such a scheme, but failed; his fame rests instead on giving and developing an artificial one. Rather than trying to take into account the myriad features that make a plant or animal like or unlike some other plant or animal, he "abstracted" one aspect of the species and assigned it a taxonomic niche according to the number and the arrangement of these particular parts.

Linnaeus reasoned that each species reproduces itself—conveys its identity—through structures that could be understood as sexual. For purposes of classification, these constituted the essence of the plant; everything else was, for the time being, irrelevant. Thus, an observer need only note the number, the relative proportion, and the configuration of the pistil—the male organ—and the stamen—the female organ of generation—in order to specify the class and the order of any plant. (Genera and species were classified by other easily recognized features of the flower and the leaves.)

The system worked by acknowledging its limitations: a useful though imperfect filing system is better than none at all. To this day, it is used to classify the angiosperms—plants with seeds enclosed in a

THOMAS W. LAQUEUR is a professor of history at the University of California at Berkeley and the author of *Making Sex: Body and Gender from the Greeks to Freud* (Harvard University Press).

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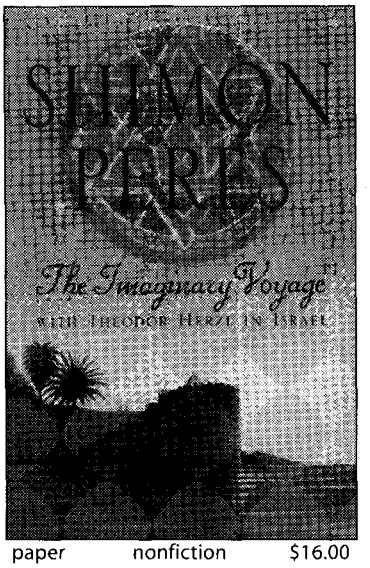

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vessel, as opposed to the naked-seeded gymnosperms such as pines and hemlocks—that constitute the vast majority of all plants. In the age before chemical analysis, Linnaeus tried the same strategy for minerals, using easily countable structures of crystals—the equivalent of reproductive parts, because they determined the structure of the specimen —to classify inanimate nature. Not much came of this scheme. He also arranged animal taxonomy, famously defining our class by its possession of mammae. But minerals and animals figure little in Koerner's book, and so we need not go into all this. The important point is that, but for Linnaeus, naturalists from the eighteenth century to our day would literally not know what exactly they were talking about.

KOERNER MAKES NO pretense of being the first to recognize Linnaeus's genius. Indeed, she points out how each generation since the eighteenth century has found its own reasons to embrace or to reject the man. His style of thought—its apparent simplicity and order—appealed to certain Enlightenment figures. Goethe regarded him—along with Shakespeare and Spinoza—as one of his three great teachers. Rousseau claims to have learned more from one of his major works than "from all books on morality." The Romantics valued him, and his backward Swedish compatriots, for being so close to nature and so free of artifice. Swedish conservatives in the nineteenth century made him into something of an icon of old-fashioned national virtue married to modern science, and Swedish social democrats of the twentieth century rejected him as the supporter of aristocracy that he was.

Modern scholars have also had their say. Some regard Linnaeus as hopelessly out-of-date. His system carries the taint of its roots in Aristotle. He was terrible with numbers at just the time when quantification seemed the way forward. He was the standard bearer of a science based on classification when experimentation was on the verge of creating the new biology. Most importantly, he is often on the wrong side of the Darwinian divide: Linnaeus seemed committed to the hoary idea, whose definitive rejection constituted Darwin's greatest achievement, that the number of species had been fixed at the creation. And his sexual system specifically has come under continuous attack. In his own day the French naturalist George-Louis Buffon lampooned the admittedly purple descriptions of the connubial bliss enjoyed by plants on their leafy marriage beds; and more recently, feminists have accused Linnaeus of naturalizing what were in fact historically specific gender norms. He seems to have written sexual difference as understood by the eighteenth century into the order of creation itself.

But Linnaeus has had his defenders. He did reject, in old age, his notorious Aphorism 162 in the *Philosophica botanica*, that "the number of species is constant"; and his vision of nature as a vast self-regulating system is echoed in the final magnificent paragraphs of *The Origin of Species*. He made possible modern botany. And the simplicity of his system democratized the field that it created, which embraced women and amateurs who were increasingly excluded from professional science. Linnaean botany welcomed women as did no other science. As for his sexism, one might argue that the avowedly artificial nature of Linnaeus's system blunts its normative powers. Epithet is not essence.

IF WE ARE to make Linnaeus into a man for all seasons, Koerner insists, then we will have to understand him and his projects not as he fits into our modern debates, but as he and his students understood themselves. This is a ferociously historicist book. Linnaeus regarded himself primarily as a civil servant whose deepest passion was not botany or zoology, and certainly not the question of women—it was economics, or more precisely natural knowledge in the service of Sweden. Unlike his famous contemporaries—Diderot, Voltaire, Goethe—he was a quintessentially local man. Koerner's book is the story of how an intensely provincial history intersects with something grander.

Carl Linnaeus was the son of an impoverished Lutheran parson who held all manner of heterodox religious views: for example, that monkeys and other animals had souls which, like ours, were immortal in some pantheistic sense of being part of "the eternal fire." A hidebound and aggressively anti-cosmopolitan sort of man, Linnaeus studied the mysteries of numbers to understand how earth, air, fire, and water combined to make our world. His house was a veritable cabinet of curiosities, seething with jumbles of life: real parrots and monkeys stood among various stuffed animals.

He taught in obscure universities in a land that, after its seventeenth-century glories, seemed to have slipped out of the mainstream of progress. Indeed, Linnaeus was in the grip of a variety of gothicism that allowed him to see even Sweden's horrendous winters as healthy and even pleasurable. The freezing cold offered no insurmountable barrier, he thought, to naturalizing tropical plants. He spoke no foreign languages and had little use for foreigners. His polynomial—genus and species—for Europeans was "ruled by fashion." He thought that the impoverished and pathetically poor Sami—the indigenous people of Sweden's far north—were a model of virtue, while the French were venereal disease-ridden decadents. And yet this odd man created a revolution in botany.

"NATURE AND NATION"—the subtitle of Koerner's book—might better have been "nature, God, and national economy": the meeting of the universal and the local; of botany or all creation on the one hand, and the history of one people on the other. As Koerner tells the tale, there were three responses to the increasingly commercial and global economy in which a depleted Sweden found itself in the eighteenth century. The first was simply to reject it—a romantic localism in which elites were willing to sacrifice the benefits of increased production and trade in the interests of traditional values. The second was the response of the classical economists—Adam Smith and his followers—who were perfectly happy to sacrifice local values in the interests of efficiency and material progress.

But there was a third response, and it still survives in a variety of forms today. This was cameralism, which held that the state— and its technical advisers, which is where Linnaeus came in—could create a viable national economy that would leave the local elites in place. Cameralism held that there need be no trade-off between progress and loss of local political power. Modernization without tears: with the right policies one could create a more or less self-sufficient autarky. Koerner nicely describes this view as "a local modernity."

Linnaeus's life was spent in pursuit of this moral and political dream: restoring a much-diminished Sweden to glory through the mastery of nature. Instead of spending hard-earned bullion to buy tea from China, Swedes would use the abundant native *Linnea borialis*, his namesake plant. Instead of wheat, often in short supply, they would use Lap lime grass. Or rather than substituting a domestic plant for a foreign one, Linnaeus and his followers would collect foreign plants for which there was a demand, and coax them into growing far from home and native clime. Thus cardamom and ginger, silk and coffee bushes, or even real tea plants would be made happy in the frigid north. (Late in his life Linnaeus proclaimed that his proudest achievement was to have introduced rhubarb into Sweden.) One might trick even the local fauna into working for the state: clams, for example, might be made to produce pearls when the natural

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harvest of the valuable commodity collapsed. In sum, God had made nature to provide all that man—Swedish man, in particular—needed, and it was the task of the scientist to figure out how his bounty could be brought home. Commerce and foreign trade were suspect and to be avoided if at all possible.

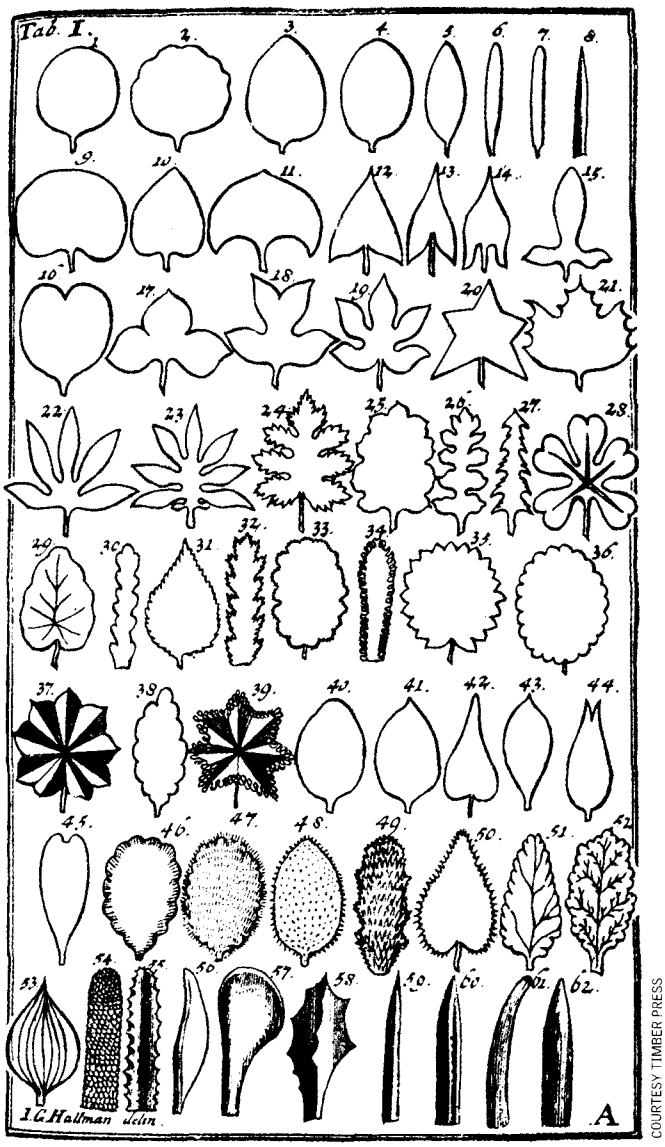
All of this might seem silly, of merely antiquarian interest. Who cares if an important scientist spent his time and his energy on quixotic schemes? And who cares if the origins of what has turned out to be a foundation of modern science—Linnaeus's system of classification—is to be found in some combination of Gothic sensibility, heterodox religion, and benighted economics? Isaac Newton probably spent more of his energies on the mysteries of the Book of Daniel than on the mysteries of the universe, but he also founded modern physics, and *that* is the history that matters.

Yet Koerner makes no apologies for resurrecting the failed or harebrained schemes to which Linnaeus devoted his life, and her historian's perseverance pays off. It is precisely Linnaeus's strangeness that Koerner demands we take seriously. The challenge, she observes, is to "dislocate our interpretive habits," to rethink our understanding of the economy and its history as a smooth progress along a well-trod secular path. There was no such trajectory of modernization in the eighteenth century, she insists. And more generally she hints that our contemporary faith in globalization as some sort of natural law might also be misplaced. One cannot help but wonder how historians will look back at our own beliefs and superstitions about the inevitability of our political economy.

But such speculations come only at the end of Koerner's book. She skillfully mines archival and printed sources in many languages to recreate for modern readers the extraordinary, heroic, and poignant efforts of Linnaeus and his students to create useful biotechnologies. It was in the course of those labors that he invented the naming and filing system that still brings order to the world's flora and fauna. The Linnaeans gathered the folk names of plants—one student produced lists in fifteen languages—because they thought these might reflect unknown uses for this or that specimen. They scoured the earth looking for exotic plants that might be useful to the Swedish economy.

It was not for the faint of heart, to be a student of Professor Linnaeus. Carl Adler traveled to Java and Guangzhou with the Swedish East India Company before he died in Java. Johannes Barch died shortly after arriving in Surinam, and a colleague survived his stint there only to go mad later. Johan Falck slit his throat in Kazan. Christopher Transrome ended his days off the shore of Cambodia. Pehr Lofling expired of a fever in Venezuela. And some survived, of course; Carl Thunber became a major figure in the history of Japanese medicine.

Together this daring band provided a mass of new plant material for study and, they hoped, for economic exploitation. It was for them, Koerner argues, that binomials were invented. After all, students on the high seas and in strange lands could not carry with them the many books required for earlier classificatory systems. Koerner tells a charming story that proposes, though she cannot prove it, that modern classification began in a pasture. It seems that binomials first appeared in a pamphlet on improved cattle feed. The young men crawling around on their hands and knees trying to record the names of plants faster than the cows could eat them needed a system that worked faster than the cumbersome numbering or other ad hoc schemes available. And so the master provided it. This is more than a "Newton's apple" sort of story. Koerner ably limns the intimate social circumstances for the production of knowledge. Even if it did not happen quite as she tells it, Linnaeus's science was clearly the child of local necessity.



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Types of simple Leaves and Indumentum, in Linnaeus, "Philosophia botanica," 1751

God was the third term in Linnaeus's moral universe, along with nature and nation; and he never seemed quite at ease with what to expect from the Creator. He believed that once, in the Garden of Eden, nature had provided humankind with all that we needed. And so, domesticating the wilderness of Lapland, or bringing tropical plants to Sweden, meant for Linnaeus a restoration in some measure of the Edenic state. At the very least, he believed that a divine economy of nature was meant to support the economies of man.

But there was a problem. Why did this rich divine economy not underwrite more manifestly a rich societal economy? The obvious answer might be Adam and Eve's fall from grace; but Koerner does not say much about Linnaeus's specific views on this matter. Instead she suggests that his life was a constant struggle between the view that God made nature for his own enjoyment rather than for man's enjoyment, and the more optimistic view that the world was filled with animate and renewable resources that science could ultimately learn to utilize. Sometimes he believed that maybe his mad student in Surinam was right: all flora and fauna did not serve man's best interests. At other times he imagined an economy that would grow as its inhabitants started using swan feathers, and not just goose feathers, as pens; elk, and not

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just horses, as transport.

Like the early political economists in the liberal Smithian tradition—and unlike many economists today—Linnaeus understood the study of goods, and their relative plenty or scarcity, as part of a moral order. He spent his life trying to recreate a pre-lapsarian plenty in Sweden, and his projects mostly came to naught. Five students were instructed to send back tea plants from China: a noble endeavor, and an end to the hated exchange of silver for dry foreign leaves. All of them failed. Two plants sent by the Swedish East India company made the last leg of the journey in a wagon with Danzig herrings, but they turned out to be the herb *Camellia*. Seeds that students sent home refused to spout. Finally a few plants did make it, cradled for the home stretch on the lap of a sea captain's wife making her way home in a oxcart. They died soon after arrival.

Tens of thousands of mulberry plants did manage to grow well enough in the Lund University garden to produce the silk for a pillow offered to one of the royal princesses; but Sweden did not become a silk power. Coffee did not make it, and neither did ginger or cardamom or cotton or coconuts. And Linnaeus failed to see the potential of New World plants that did thrive in Europe, most importantly the potato. He regarded the potato as poisonous. His scheme to have clams produce an abundance of pearls—for which he was well-rewarded financially, and given a patent of nobility for this idea—also flopped. His was never to become "The Lord of All Sweden's Clams."

KOERNER IS CAREFUL to not allow her readers the luxury of condescension. For not all of Linnaeus's ideas and projects were quite so wacky. Free trade, as opposed to cameralism, was not self-evidently the wave of the future; Japan and China, which in the eighteenth century had famously closed economies, seemed to be much richer than their would-be trade partners in Europe. Some plants did thrive far from home—most lucratively tobacco, which spread first throughout the Western hemisphere and from there into the rest of the world. And transmutational botany is alive and well in genetics laboratories, where flounder genes keep tomatoes from freezing and shrimp DNA serves for proteins in flora far from the sea. At a more general level, the Linnaean vision of science in the service of nation and economy has come to pass beyond his wildest hopes.

But this is not Koerner's main argument. A certain gentle irony pervades this book and its view of history. There are moments of comedy: stories of substituting marijuana for aquavit or swamp dogwood for tobacco or Swedish Spanish fly for the real stuff are worth a chuckle. And there are moments of tragedy: the deaths of almost half of Linnaeus's students in their quests for plants is less funny. Yet it is irony that rules, in small ways and large. The greatness of potatoes was recognized by the only woman elected to the Swedish Academy, who saw the tuber's potential for making aquavit and wig flour. (One should point out that the effort to divert grain from alcohol production to breadmaking was decidedly not a joke in famine-prone Sweden.) And the very fact that we know so much about Linnaeus is due to a little twist: his scientific archives are preserved in London because his wife frugally decided to use the paper for securely packing his specimen collection, which she sold after his death.

Koerner's book is valuable not least for its subtle account of how our modern science developed not out of a rejection of religion, but out of religion's core; and this, too, is an irony. (Other historians have made this point lately, but seldom as elegantly as it is made here.) Yet the biggest irony is that of history itself. This is a book about what Koerner calls the "long-forgotten future of the past." It is about a complex vision of modernity whereby nations at the margins of progress seek their own way forward. The path was not plain in the eighteenth century, and it is not, Koerner suggests, so clear now. As the recent protests in Seattle showed, not everyone is happy about giving up local culture and local autonomy in the interest of what some see as the inevitable next stage of modernity, the universal idyll that they call "globalization."

To be sure, recent forays into autarchy have not always been attractive—Koerner mentions Nazi Germany, and one might think also of China in the early 1930s. And nobody today would propose the sort of anti-commercial cameralism to which Linnaeus devoted his life, if for no other reason than that it was predicated on unsustainable austerity for the ordinary person. But the really important lesson of the strange career of Linnaeus is that nothing is inevitable, and there is no single road to progress. Perhaps we are as blind to our future as Linnaeus was to his future. It was, anyway, not a disastrous blindness. Great things come also of failed hopes. ■

The Futility of Utility

By PETER BERKOWITZ

Law and Social Norms by Eric A. Posner

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I.

THE HUMAN MIND has long exhibited a restless ambition to bring the entirety of moral and political life, in all its complexity and its many-sidedness, under the sway of a single cause or an exclusive principle. The dream of a unified and comprehensive theory may well be the dream of understanding itself. But what must men and women and the world in which they live be like in order to make this dream a reality? What strategy is best suited to satisfying the mind's ambition?

PETER BERKOWITZ teaches at George Mason University Law School and is the author, most recently, of *Virtue and the Making of Modern Liberalism* (Princeton University Press).

As it happens, at this very moment a pitched battle rages among professors who study politics and law over the question of which method or theoretical perspective provides the key—the single key, remember—to the proper understanding of human affairs. Consider the recent skirmish in *The New York Times* in which Ian Shapiro of Yale squared off against Morris Fiorina of Stanford. Shapiro, a political theorist and a coauthor of a provocative study called *The Pathologies of Rational Choice*, argued that the decades-long effort to apply economic analysis to politics has thus far proved barren. The highly abstract formal theories and the intricate mathematical models characteristic of the rational choice perspective, contends Shapiro, have issued in claims that are either trivially true or empirically false. And the method has left unilluminated, so far at least, many of the the problems that most

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exercise people who care about politics: what caused the collapse of communism? Why do some democracies prosper and others perish? How can health care be reformed in a manner that is both efficient and just?

In a relaxed and jocular reply, Fiorina, a widely respected proponent of the rational choice perspective, insisted that there was really nothing to get all hot and bothered about. Only a few enthusiasts, he claimed, believe that politics ought to be analyzed in economic terms alone. In any case, he observed in a reassuring and conciliatory tone, political scientists are "inveterate borrowers," who, in the 1950s, took from psychology and sociology, in recent decades have learned what they could from economics, and are now turning to biology as a source of insight about politics.

Neither Shapiro nor Fiorina is altogether convincing. For his part, Shapiro understates the genuine successes of the rational choice perspective, in particular its capacity to generate fertile hypotheses and to suggest productive lines of inquiry—in political science, concerning the impact of institutional rules on the outcomes of Congressional lawmaking; and in law, in the study of the comparative advantages of the variety of remedies provided by courts in contract and tort litigation, and the likely consequences of alternative public policies and competing regulatory schemes. Meanwhile, and more seriously, Fiorina misleads in numerous ways. He implies that only a few isolated practitioners of rational choice are methodologically monistic. He presents the borrowing of political scientists (of which he takes note and approves) as a kind of eclecticism, when in fact it reflects a prolonged and resolute effort to model the social sciences on the natural sciences. And he suggests that the growing interest in biology represents a departure from the rational choice paradigm, when in reality social scientists are now looking at what biology has to teach about organisms' adaptive mechanisms in order to gain further insight into what counts as a choice that is rational.

In sorting out the fine points of the professors' arguments, however, one must not lose sight of the forest for the trees—or confuse leaves and branches for trunk and roots. The squabble between Shapiro and Fiorina scanted a fundamental question: is it humane learning, including history, literature, and philosophy, that should direct the study of human affairs, or should a scientistic rationalism provide the authoritative model for the quest to understand moral and political life? For some reason, neither political scientist provides the slightest acknowledgment that his debate raises old questions, much less that he is taking sides in a hotly contested, richly reasoned, and time-honored quarrel. This is a quarrel that has featured Swift, Vico, Mill, and Nietzsche (who railed against the positivism and value-free scholarship of his day, and strove to supplant it with a form of historical inquiry that he called "genealogy," which he defended on the grounds that it was more consistent with the requirements of its free human subject), Dilthey (who suggested that "understanding" is an entirely different intellectual activity from "explanation"), Weber, and Heidegger; and more recently Hannah Arendt, Leo Strauss, Michael Oakeshott, Alasdair MacIntyre, and Charles Taylor, who all argued, in one way or another, that the interpretation of human conduct in purely scientific terms, as strictly obedient to the laws of cause and effect, diminishes human freedom and human dignity. Perhaps the quarrel between Shapiro and Fiorina extends as far back as Socrates's admonition to the young Theatetus to be wary of mathematics-intoxicated philosophers who, believing only in that which they can count and measure and weigh, would place study of the soul outside the domain of reasoned inquiry.

Both kinds of inquiry, of course, are indispensable. What reasonable person would wish to make his way in the world, or to claim to understand moral and political life, without the knowledge that comes from the thick and rich narratives characteristic of literature and history, or without the knowledge yielded by the scientist's formal elaboration and empirical testing of lawlike causal generalizations? And yet it cannot be gainsaid that, in the study of human affairs, the spirit of finesse (as Pascal put it), of delicacy and judgment, has primacy over the spirit of geometry, or mathematical precision and scientific rigor. This is so not least because the limit and the value of science cannot be fixed.

Another critical reason for the primacy of the spirit of finesse is that human beings are what Charles Taylor has described as "self-interpreting animals." Their interpretations—their hopes and fears, their opinions and ideas, their language and culture—are a constitutive part of the reality that the student of human affairs seeks to understand. No amount of scientific rigor will save the student of human affairs who cannot distinguish gestures of respect from gestures of flattery, a noble defeat from a pyrrhic victory, a wounded heart from a heart of stone. It is not that rigor is out of place in the explanation of human conduct, or that the actions of human beings are not subject to law-like regularities and causal explanations. But the rigor that is required for the study of human affairs involves discerning accurately the *meaning* of an act for an individual and a community or a society, lest one, among other things, apply the wrong rules and overlook the correct causes.

II.

Eric Posner wishes to improve the economic analysis of law by incorporating into it a more rigorous understanding of the impact on behavior of the social meaning of action. In his lucidly written and sharply argued book on the relation between law and "non-legal mechanisms of cooperation," Posner contends that many conceptual confusions and embarrassing puzzles that have been generated by the economic analysis of law can be cleared up, and the research paradigm as a whole can be advanced, by taking account of the pervasive and powerful role of social norms:

> The positive branch of law and economics assumes that the individual goes about satisfying his preferences, subject to a budget constraint, but unaffected by the attitudes of others. Preferences may be egoistic or altruistic or both, but nothing, other than the state, prevents individuals from preying on each other when it serves their interests. A person will steal, or drive carelessly, or murder, or lie, unless the state erects a deterrent in the form of laws against theft, negligence, murder, and fraud. This description of the world is partly true, but mostly false. Most people refrain most of the time from antisocial behavior even when the law is absent or has no force. They conform to social norms.

Posner, as he himself notes, is not the first law professor to observe that legal scholars, especially those at home in law and economics, have tended to underestimate, when they have not ignored outright, the place of social norms in the explanation of human conduct. But unfortunately the critics—ranging all the way back to eminent legal realists such as Karl Llewellyn and up to thoughtful contemporaries such as Cass Sunstein and Lawrence Lessig—have invoked social norms as an explanatory variable in a "profligate and inconsistent way." Inspired by the spirit of geometry, Posner aims to go beyond the critics by providing for the study of the relation between law and social norms a new and truly rigorous "methodology" or "analytic framework" or "model."

Posner derives his new model from game theory, the basic methodology or

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analytical framework that underlies much of the economic analysis of law as well as the rational choice approach in political science. Game theory seeks to produce a system of propositions that is general, formal, and deductive. It starts from the austere assumption that human beings are self-interested actors who rationally maximize their utility by engaging in various kinds of strategic action. It suggests that the recurring challenge for such individuals is to find and to maintain the conditions under which they can cooperate, for in most cases cooperation is mutually beneficial, conferring gains on these self-interested rationalists that they could not attain alone. And it tacitly sends a hopeful message about the prospects of human life: without recourse to divine authority, or to transcendent principles of justice, or to a belief in human goodness, individuals can learn to live with each other in peace and in prosperity.

Thus cooperation is possible because human beings are rational creatures capable of weighing consequences and determining efficient means for achieving their ends. But alas, human nature—in particular our indomitable desire to satisfy our own interests, including on occasion our interests in benefiting others—is not altogether obliging in this matter. It also makes cooperation difficult. One difficulty created by our essential selfishness is that the establishment of the conditions under which we can rely on others—who, like us, are essentially selfish—to honor their promises requires the very trust and cooperation that the conditions are meant to secure. Once the conditions for cooperation have been established, moreover, circumstances will frequently present the partners in these cooperative schemes—husbands and wives, fellow citizens, parties to commercial contracts—with opportunities to advance their perceived interests by means of what game theorists call "defecting" or "opportunistic behavior," and what ordinary people call lying, cheating, and stealing. This is what makes necessary the "enforcement mechanisms" provided by the state: through its weighty apparatus of legislative bodies, executive authority, courts, and police, the state establishes a crucial condition of cooperation by imposing hefty costs on individuals who violate the law and the formal agreements into which they voluntarily enter.

The trouble with standard game-theoretical accounts, Posner points out, is that although the state and its laws do not effectively reach many corners of moral and political life, one nevertheless finds individuals in these many corners successfully cooperating to their mutual benefit. Despite the absence of rigorous state enforcement of marriage vows, a considerable number of people still get married and honor their marital obligations. Despite the absence of legal sanctions for staying at home on Election Day and the unlikelihood of decisively influencing the outcome of a national election, millions still go to the polls. Despite clumsy and inefficient courts, big and small businesses continue to enter into commercial contracts and routinely comply with them.

MANY OBSERVERS MAY find little that is remarkable in such behavior. Indeed, it may seem obvious that the explanation for the persistence of marriage, voting, and commercial contracting lies in the promptings of conscience, the call of duty, the pride in honoring one's word, or the perfectly common concern for one's good name and the good opinion of others. Such explanations, however, seem to stand outside the game-theoretical universe, which permits explanations of human conduct only in the terms of rational self-interest. Posner's achievement is to secure the game-theoretical universe against the difficulties posed by the many examples of cooperation in the absence of legal enforcement mechanisms, by explaining such conduct in terms that are consistent with game theory. Indeed, from the game-theoretical perspective, Posner's explanation is striking and elegant: it is not that in some domains of moral and political life "enforcement mechanisms" are unnecessary, but that *non-legal* enforcement mechanisms, in the form of social norms, play a much larger role in creating the conditions for cooperation than most economists have imagined.

The key to understanding the role of social norms in the regulation of human conduct, Posner argues, is to see them as a specialized kind of game, a "signaling game," in which the prize is a reputation for trustworthiness. Rational actors have a compelling interest in behaving in a manner that, though costly in the short run, provides long-term benefits by demonstrating their reliability:

> . . . [P]eople engage in behavioral regularities in order to show that they are desirable partners in cooperative endeavors. Defection in cooperative endeavors is deterred by fear of reputational injury, but the signaling behavior independently gives rise to forms of collective action that can be of great significance. People who care about future payoffs not only resist the temptation to cheat in a relationship; they signal their ability to resist the temptation to cheat by conforming to styles of dress, speech, conduct, and discrimination. The resulting behavioral regularities, which I describe as "social norms," can vastly enhance or diminish social welfare.

"Good types" is what Posner calls the individuals who maximize their interests by complying with social norms. He is careful to note that he means nothing moral by the appellation, only that these individuals have "low discount rates" or a high concern for "future payoffs"—or, in less technical parlance, the capacity to defer gratification. Those individuals who, by flouting social norms, acquire a reputation for being dishonest and out only for themselves Posner calls "bad types," a term he uses amorally to mean only that they have high discount rates, or care relatively little for future payoffs; or, lacking self-control, sacrifice a lot of satisfaction in the future for a little satisfaction right now.

WHAT POSNER SEEMS to be saying, in accordance with the wisdom of the ages but translated into the language of economic theory, is that reputation, or maintaining a good name, is an immensely valuable asset. What will trouble some readers is the suspicion that Posner is also claiming, with Machiavelli, that it is more important to appear good than to be good; and that he is make this claim for the same reason that Machiavelli did, on the grounds that morality is a mirage, or at least a discourse that is reducible to something more fundamental and thoroughly nonmoral.

Once one grasps the rational interest in reputation that motivates individuals to comply with social norms, one can provide explanations from the economic perspective to perplexities that have defied analysis in economic terms: why, despite the considerable autonomy granted to families by traditional marital law, spouses still often honor marital obligations; and why individuals vote, given the almost infinitely remote prospect that their ballot will determine the outcome of the election; and why parties honor commercial contracts notwithstanding that the judicial system, whose responsibility it is to enforce contracts and to remedy their breaches, is costly and inefficient. Yet Posner's norm-based economic analysis of these perplexities begs a big question. Who says that economic terms provide the best terms or the only terms for the understanding of marriage, citizenship, and commercial contracts? Just because you can sustain yourself on a diet of bread and butter and beans and berries does not mean that it is reasonable to be satisfied with such austere provisions, or that you would not prosper on richer fare.

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Arabian Fables (I)

How the Arabs soften up world opinion with fanciful myths.

Josef Goebbels, the infamous propaganda minister of the Nazis, had it right. Just tell people big lies often enough and they will believe them. The Arabs have learned that lesson well. They have swayed world opinion by endlessly repeating myths and lies that have no basis in fact.

What are some of these myths?

The "Palestinians". That is the fundamental myth. The concept of "Palestinians" is one that did not exist until about 1948, when the Arab inhabitants, of what until then was Palestine, wished to differentiate themselves from the Jews. Until then, the Jews were the Palestinians. There was the Palestinian Brigade of Jewish volunteers in the British World War II Army (at a time when the Palestinian Arabs were in Berlin hatching plans with Adolf Hitler for world conquest and how to kill all the Jews); there was the Palestinian Symphony Orchestra (all Jews, of course); there was *The Palestine Post*; and so much more.

The Arabs who now call themselves "Palestinians" do so in order to persuade a misinformed world that they are a distinct nationality and that "Palestine" is their ancestral homeland. But they are no distinct nationality at all. They are the same — in language, custom, and tribal and family ties — as the Arabs of Syria, Jordan, and beyond. There is no more difference between the "Palestinians" and the other Arabs of those countries than there is between, say, the citizens of Minnesota and those of Wisconsin.

What's more, many of the "Palestinians", or their immediate ancestors, came to the area attracted by the prosperity created by the Jews, in what previously had been pretty much of a wasteland.

The nationhood of the "Palestinians" is a myth.

The "West Bank". Again, this is a concept that did not exist until 1948, when the army of the Kingdom of Transjordan, together with five other Arab armies, invaded the Jewish state of Israel, on the very day of its creation.

In what can almost be described as a Biblical miracle, the ragtag Jewish forces defeated the combined Arab might. But Transjordan stayed in possession of Judea and Samaria and the eastern part of Jerusalem. The Jordanians expelled all the Jews from the area that they occupied, destroyed all Jewish houses of worship, and renamed as "West Bank" the territories that had been Judea and Samaria since time immemorial.

The attempt, quite successful, was to persuade an uninformed world that these territories were ancestral parts of the Jordanian Arab Kingdom (itself a very recent creation of British power diplomacy).

> "The web of lies and myths that the Arab propaganda machine has created plays an important role in the unrelenting quest to destroy the State of Israel. What a shame that the world has accepted most of it!"

Even after the total rout of the Arabs in the 1967 Six-Day War, in which the Jordanians were driven out of Judea/Samaria and of Jerusalem, they and the world continued to call this territory the "West Bank", a geographical and political concept that cannot be found on any except the most recent maps.

The concept of the "West Bank" is a myth.

The "Occupied Territories". After the victorious Six-Day War, during which the Israeli army defeated the same cabal of Arabs that had invaded the country in 1948, Israel regained possession of Judea/Samaria, which the Jordanians had illegally occupied for 19 years; of the Gaza Strip, which had been occupied by the Egyptians, but which had never been part of their country; and of the Golan Heights, a plateau the size of Queens, which, though originally part of Palestine, had been assigned to Syria by British-French agreement.

The last sovereign in Judea/Samaria and in Gaza was the British mandatory power — and before it was the Ottoman Empire. All of Palestine, including what is now the Kingdom of Jordan, was, by the Balfour Declaration, destined to be the Jewish National Home. How then could the Israelis possibly be "occupiers" in their own territory? Who would be the sovereign and who the rightful inhabitants?

The concept of "occupied territories" in reference to Judea/Samaria and Gaza is an Arab propaganda myth.

Unable so far to destroy Israel on the battlefield — though they are feverishly preparing for their next assault — the Arabs are now trying to overcome and destroy Israel by their acknowledged "policy of stages". That policy is to get as much land as possible carved out of Israel "by peaceful and diplomatic" means, so as to make Israel indefensible and softened up for the final assault. The web of lies and myths that the Arab propaganda machine has created plays an important role in the unrelenting quest to destroy the State of Israel. What a shame that the world has accepted most of it!

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Consider Posner's analysis of family law. The puzzle from the economic perspective is why individuals generally obey their marriage vows:

> On the one hand, people who form family relationships obtain valuable goods and services that are for the most part not available from the market and other outside institutions, and they do so without depending on formal contract law backed up by the threat of government enforcement. On the other hand, to the extent that people do not rely on government enforcement of marital obligations, they become highly vulnerable to opportunism within the family.

The "marital surplus"—an economic term that Posner uses to designate what are commonly thought of as moral phenomena, namely the "valuable goods and services" obtained through marriage—may vary from time to time and place to place, but generally speaking it "consists of the benefits from having children, the emotional benefits from companionship and sexual intimacy, mutual aid, and many other valuable goods and services." The marital surplus depends on compliance with "marital 'obligations'"—an ethical term that Posner uses to designate phenomena that he has already translated into economic terms, namely the common interest of spouses in maximizing the marital surplus. But how do people select their spouses? What actions and arrangements enable individuals to maximize the marital surplus? What would be "the optimal marriage laws"?

Courtship, contends Posner, should be understood as a strategic game. Aligning himself with Jane Austen—if the courtship and marriage of Elizabeth Bennet and Mr. Darcy can be captured in economic terms, what love can resist such redescription?—Posner argues that while the stakes are no longer as high as in Austen's day, "particularly for a young woman of elite society, whose future depended to a great extent on whether she made a good match," the courtship game is still played with intensity. In courtship, people look for signs of, and send signals declaring their own, "healthiness, including fertility; wealth and wealth-generating assets including human capital; charm, humor, and other qualities that make for an attractive companion."

Posner particularly emphasizes are the signals that people send to show that they are trustworthy. Trustworthiness is a prerequisite for enjoying all the goods associated with marriage "because only trustworthy people will incur the short-term costs necessary to produce the long-term marital surplus." In courting, one can demonstrate one's trustworthiness, for example, by giving expensive gifts selected especially for the object of one's affection, for such gifts demonstrate that the gift-giver, in the interests of a long-term relationship, is willing to incur costs of time and money, and is wealthy enough to do so. Celibacy in courtship, the willingness to delay sexual gratification, can show devotion by virtue of the deprivation that one is willing to undergo. At the same time, premarital sex can also be a way for partners to prove that they are healthy and attractive.

And the need for signaling by no means abates in marriage. In game-theoretical terms, marriage is a relationship in which "each spouse deters the other from cheating by threatening to punish any transgressions of the marital obligations." How does one know whether one's spouse is cooperating or cheating? Since information is never perfect, signals must be sent. In the traditional family, the propensity to cooperate is signaled through gift-giving, regular celebrations, and a shrewdly designed division of labor and rewards between husband and wife. The wife takes care of the house and rears the children. When the children are poorly behaved, the wife incurs the immediate consequences at home each day, but, when the rearing goes well, she reaps the benefits of a close connection to her offspring. The husband works outside the home for wages. He is constrained to do his job conscientiously because he alone is responsible for wages. While he misses out on a close bond with the children, success in his career earns him honor and public recognition.

Posner observes that the new family, in which both spouses are likely to work outside the home and both take some responsibility for child rearing, has destabilized the family by creating new opportunities for cheating without forging compensating enforcement mechanisms, legal or non-legal. Yet his analysis is basically optimistic: people are rational actors, and so it is likely that non-legal enforcement mechanisms appropriate to the new family will arise, for "social norms are endogenous in games in which people maximize their interests through cooperation." In other words, since social norms "do not exist independent of people's interests, beliefs, and behavior," new social norms, consistent with new interests, beliefs, and behaviors will come into being.

But what of the interim, of the perplexing period when old social norms are losing their efficacy and new norms are still forming? In times of change, can game-theoretical analysis offer any advice on how the law, or legal enforcement mechanisms, can be employed to protect marriage, and increase the marital surplus? Posner considers briefly the law of divorce, intra-marital disputes, the treatment of children, and same-sex marriage. He concludes fairly quickly that in all cases "successful legal intervention" is unlikely, because

> to change behavior substantially, the state would have to launch a full-scale assault against all the near substitutes of marriage, and this would mean bringing back archaic penalties on fornication, adultery, illegitimacy, and serial polygamy. Given the indifference to these behaviors among a large sector of the population, and the powerful interests that support them, a successful legal intervention—one that encouraged marriage, deferred cohabitation and illegitimacy, discouraged divorce, and maximized the marital surpluses—would have to be dramatic and highly coercive. This would be neither desirable nor, as long as current trends continue, possible.

These are sensible conclusions. They are also, in the context of Posner's theorizing, revealing conclusions. For while his invocation of social norms in the analysis of family law may not be "profligate" or "inconsistent," Posner's parsimony and consistency do not seem to have yielded him much of a gain in understanding, beyond the assuredly crucial lesson that the powers of habit, custom, and convention render the law a clumsy and blunt tool for effecting social change. Moreover, the economic analysis of family law and social norms does not seem to have obviated the need for moral judgment in determining which laws are optimal, as evidenced by Posner's contention that "highly coercive" laws are "undesirable," a judgment that seems to rest on the proposition that choice, or individual freedom, is a primary good. But it does make it more difficult, and it obscures the need, to explain what freedom is good for.

Posner applies his model of cooperation to a number of areas of law, and he consistently comes up with illuminating game-theoretical solutions to game-theoretical problems. Two more examples must suffice. Posner seeks to understand the so-called voting paradox—the problem, again, of why rational actors, whose individual votes almost certainly will not decide the outcome of an election, bother to vote—by viewing voting as a form of "patriotic symbolism." Through the act of voting one engages in symbolic behavior that demonstrates that one is loyal to the state. It is rational to

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engage in the time-consuming act of casting a ballot precisely because your vote will have little effect on who wins: you show that you belong to the good type by participating in an onerous ritual that has no other likely benefit to you. (Or voting would be rational if, unlike in the world in which we happen to live, people whose opinion mattered to you actually saw you entering the voting booth.)

Consider also Posner's analysis of commercial behavior. Why do merchants and businessmen honor contracts, when it is plain that courts—which usually lack expertise and suffer from heavy case backlogs—provide a highly imperfect enforcement mechanism? One reason is that rational actors who do business in a community and engage in repeat transactions with the same party, or who trade with many parties, have a rational interest in establishing a reputation for honoring their agreements. As Benjamin Franklin counseled, honesty is the best policy. Posner goes beyond Franklin by suggesting that not only does morality pay, but there is nothing more to morality than the profit, or the satisfaction of preference, that it procures.

III.

IMPUTING SUCH AN opinion to Posner may seem inappropriate, for it might appear that his model of cooperation is careful to take no stand on the question of the morality's ultimate status. In fact, though, a specific view about the nature of morality is inscribed in the very manner in which Posner defines and analyzes social norms. Posner's use of the terms "social norm" and "norm" differs significantly from most people's understanding of the term.

In ordinary usage, "norm" refers both to a regularity and to a standard. When people say that the norm in our society is to treat each individual as equal in the eyes of the law, they mean that such equality is typical *and* that is just or good. Of course, what is typical is not necessarily just or good, and what is just or good is not necessarily typical. Discrimination on the basis of skin color was once typical in this country, but it was always unjust. For many social scientists, indeed, a "normative statement" is a moral judgment, a statement about values or what ought to be the case, and the opposite of a "descriptive statement," or observation about facts or what is the case. The point is that the ambiguity, the tension between behavioral regularity and moral standard, between the typical and the just or good, is built into our notion of a norm. And Posner's redefinition of social norm as a behavioral regularity eliminates the tension in such a way as to imply that the just and the good are intelligible entirely in terms of the behavioral, that all we need to know about morality can be understood in instrumental terms.

The polemic embedded in Posner's vocabulary is not excused by observing that it is the very purpose of a model or a formal theory to purify terms, to abstract, to to simplify. For Posner need not have seized on "norm" as a technical term to denote a behavioral regularity; he could have used "convention," or "social practice," or "behavioral regularity." Indeed, a recurring feature of Posner's model-making is the use of moral terms in nonmoral contexts. Thus a "marital obligation" is not a duty, it is an interest. It was Hobbes' subversive rhetorical strategy to reinterpret the laws of nature as prudent maxims of self-preservation, and thereby to eviscerate the moral content of the traditional moral vocabulary that he continued to employ; and in a vaguely similar way Posner routinely uses moral language in his analysis to refer to nonmoral or instrumental conduct. At the same time he eliminates the language of morality where it seems most essential—performing the remarkable feat of writing an entire chapter on marriage and the family without ever mentioning love.

The effect of the relentless message—excuse me, the relentless signal—sent by Posner's rhetoric is to proclaim that social norms are the only sort of norms there are, or at least the only norms worth studying for the purpose of understanding human affairs. Nor is this message about morality only communicated rhetorically and subliminally. Posner squarely addresses the claim that principle can be a reason for action in politics; that on occasion individuals will refuse to make trade-offs; that some options and goods are incommensurable, and so certain deeds are wrong no matter how well one might be paid for performing them. Not true, he says. What purports to be principled action is always strategic action:

> My argument is that although the incommensurability thesis often describes peoples' *representations* about themselves, it does not describe their actual *behaviors*, that is, the choices they make in everyday life, although their representations sometimes influence their behavior. People rationally make incommensurability claims in order to obtain strategic advantages in their interactions with others. Incommensurability claims do no reflect peoples' interests and values; they conceal them.

As with honor, duty, love, and every other good that makes a claim to stand above human beings and to draw our gaze upward, Posner's game-theoretical approach requires that principles must be explained as something else, namely, a form of rational self-interest. In Posner's account, people have an interest in appearing to be principled, in maintaining a reputation for acting consistently and placing some goods—friends, family, one's sacred honor—beyond market considerations. When we seek to appear to put devotion to some action or good or person beyond market considerations, it is always on the basis of market considerations.

When push comes to shove, if enough money is dangled in front of your nose, or if necessity bears down harshly enough in the form of threats to your life and limb, then you will find a way to put supposed incommensurables in the balance. This is

Glass Ways: Tuesday

Chips, drupes
pale blues and greens
mauve thoughts

beaten smooth by
waves that will not let up,
let go, but grind glass

against gravel, sand,
wishing rocks with their white
bands straight through.

To go in again
buffeted, worn down, broken;
admirable
as the blind one
who swam kitty-corner
to the rocks
and would not give up.

Sea that turns a dead seal.
The tide runs into the cliffs
takes
the path we walk on,
treacherous.

To not end up in someone's
bucket or basket
but stay in, kin
to the fin and krill.

Talvikki Ansel

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how Posner would explain the behavior of the wealthy, well-bred men on the *Titanic* who leapt into lifeboats ahead of women and children; and of the numerous deserters on both sides in the Civil War; and of the spouses and lovers who, when temptation and the low risk of getting caught combine, violate with abandon their promises of fidelity.

But how would Posner explain the numerous gentlemen, by far the majority, who went down with the *Titanic* in honor of the principle women and children first? Or understand the large numbers of soldiers documented in James McPherson's stirring book *Of Cause and Comrades*, who enlisted in the Union Army and the Confederate Army on the basis of principle, and who entered the fray motivated by principle, and re-enlisted and returned to the hellish battlegrounds in the name of principle? Or make sense of those lovers, many unsung owing to the dictates of discretion and devotion, for whom the beloved is more precious than life itself? No doubt all such conduct can be re-described in game-theoretical terms. What is astonishing is how much less we know about our humanity when we do so.

IV.

ERIC POSNER'S MODEL of human affairs reflects a generally upbeat outlook, belying the famous designation of economics as the dismal science. Locating the source of cooperation in selfishness, and finding deep rationality in what have appeared to many economists and noneconomists alike to be irrational forms of behavior, Posner's analysis suggests that letting people alone tends to advance both order and freedom. On occasion, it is true, he seems not so much to be telling us something that we don't know as telling economists something that they don't know, in terms that they can understand. And the austerity of his method inhibits Posner from making clear the values or the goods, particularly the good of individual freedom, that his analysis advances. For the most part, however, Posner's rigorous application of his model of cooperation to a rich variety of issues in moral and political life is deft and stimulating. Indeed, it provides an enlightening contemporary perspective on the ancient proposition, championed by, among others, Thrasymachus in Plato's *Republic*, that it is not justice that is choiceworthy but rather a reputation for justice.

To be sure, there are notions internal to Posner's perspective that warrant much greater elaboration. If all human beings are by nature rational actors, how is it that some communities form individuals who tend to have a low discount rate, or less of a habit of restraining themselves in the present for the sake of greater pleasure and profit in the future, and some do not? What qualities of mind and character—or, in the language of Hobbes, what moral virtues—does cooperation depend upon? What beliefs, practices, and institutions foster, or do not foster, the qualities of mind and character that support cooperation?

Posner's analysis also gives rise to questions that lead one beyond his framework. For surely our understanding of the law is bound up with opinions about metaphysics, morals, and man. The economic analysis of law aims to distinguish law from morals so as to produce a more rigorously scientific understanding of the law. Proponents of the approach sometimes claim that distinguishing law from morals does not decide the question of morality, but merely sets it aside. This may be the case in some efforts to distinguish law from ethics; but the protestations of methodological modesty notwithstanding, game-theoretical analysis effects this separation by taking a stand on the nature of the universe, the status of morality, and the quality of our humanity. With Hobbes (but without ever quite owning up to the filiation), the game theorist supposes that the world is matter in motion and nothing more; that there is no greatest good or ultimate aim, no human perfection or salvation; that the primary and only salient motive for human conduct is rational self-interest.

Of course, rational self-interest is a powerful motive of human conduct, and so it is to be expected that game theory will continue to shed light on many areas of moral and political life. But surely it is an open question—and it is likely to remain one, so long as people desire and think and love—whether, when all is said and done, the world is nothing more than matter in motion, and whether the soul can be reduced to what is doubtless one of its most common and powerful drives; and so surely it is a mistake to grant the game-theoretical approach the sovereignty in the study of human affairs that it avidly, and on occasion imperiously, seeks. Economics casts light, but economicism casts darkness.

When their thoughts turn to practice, proponents of the game-theoretical analysis tend to look upon law as a technique of rational social control. Not for them the antiquated talk about the majesty of the law, or the idea that the law is a noble calling, which summons from lawyers and judges love of fair process, a sense of proportion, personal integrity, the art of deliberation, the virtue of practical wisdom. Not for them the silly, sentimental speculation that the rule of law, understood as a system of rights and responsibilities in which each citizen is treated by the state as essentially free and equal, is a system befitting the dignity of man. The philosophical implications of the law must be overcome. The law must be demystified and translated into its homelier components, the better to serve the interests of us all.

But finally the law really cannot do without the dignity of man, if it is to command the assent and even the awe that it must command. To strip the law of its majesty, man must first be divested of his dignity. There may be rationality in all these clever actors making strategic moves for the aggrandizement of their interests; but there is not much dignity. Are men and women who have been divested of their dignity worthy of respect by the law? And is a law that has lost its majesty capable of commanding the respect even of these rational actors? These are questions, at once empirical and moral, that turn on the structure of the soul, or, if you prefer, on the logic of human desire. However these questions are finally answered, it is reasonable to believe that the game-theoretical standpoint, in its quest for comprehensiveness, diminishes us, if in no other way than by making us small in our own eyes. Insofar as we are small, game theory may explain what we do; but we are not only small. ■

CORRESPONDENCE

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justice, organized labor, the welfare of the environment, and so on. Foer can chuckle at the hand puppets and poorly worded signage if he likes, but it is hard to deny that the demonstrations have led to an overdue examination of the IMF and World Bank. As the studious, well-dressed, fun-adverse protesters of yore would say, "Lead, follow, or get out of the way."

BILL RIGNEY
Arlington, Virginia

FRANKLIN FOER REPLIES:

Are there intellectuals within the anarchist movement? Sure, and Roadrunner Krazykatovitch may be one of them. Unfortunately, almost all the other anarchists I interviewed had no discernable intellectual interests. I spent dozens of hours at their protest headquarters (the "Convergence Center") and heard depressingly few discussions of neoliberalism, Emma Goldman, or anything else remotely serious. I've perused *Z* magazine and found it

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devoid of the sort of theoretical discussions that were once the hallmark of the left. (Fulminations about Mumia Abu-Jamal don't count.) This pragmatism may help the left, as Paul Street points out; the New New Left does have fewer silly sectarian disputes than the New Left or the old left. But the lack of intellectual rigor means that little attention has been paid to honing a message, which made the protesters' case against globalization hopelessly muddled. More specifically, Adam Thompson argues that my emphasis on anarchism was a non sequitur because the protests encompassed a broad coalition of leftists. He has a point. Leftists of all stripes were present. But the very large anarchist contingent was a new phenomenon, a decisive break with the recent history of the American left. That's why I focused on it.

Krazykatovitch says I botched his name. He has my apologies. I had intended to ask him to spell and explain his moniker, but he disappeared into the crowd before I had a chance. (He had a habit of hiding in the presence of police.) In addition, I wrongly concluded, given his unusual name, that he had made it up to obscure his identity, a purpose also served by the multiple bandannas covering his face. As for the color of his blazer and the nature of his quote, they're in my notes.

Love and death

To the editors:

I am writing in response to Ruth Wisse's use of my book, *Klezmer! Jewish Music From Old World to Our World*, to beat the Yiddish community over the head ("The Smell of the Greasepaint, the Roar of the Torah," May 1). In what is less a review than a rant, Wisse drags out her timeworn tirade on the bankruptcy of contemporary Yiddish culture at the expense of the facts or scope of my work (it is not merely "on the recent phenomenon of klezmer music"; it is the first book in English on klezmer's 600-year history and on Yiddish popular culture).

Unsubstantiated observations about the cultural literacy of those in klezmer music notwithstanding, Wisse—the Yiddish equivalent of a Holocaust denier—devalues the fact that the music and its attendant culture has reached hundreds of thousands of people worldwide, no small feat in itself. But it is as a gateway for young, disenfranchised Jews to reclaim a portion of their heritage that the Yiddish renewal is unprecedented. Why Wisse should want to dismiss this delicate process rather than champion it is an ongoing mystery.

In the face of the growing movement of young Yiddishists, Wisse's dream of delivering the keynote eulogy at the funeral of Yiddish culture will likely go unrealized.

Henry Sapoznik
Olivebridge, New York

Ruth Wisse replies:

Henry Sapoznik's letter does more than I ever could to dispel the false nostalgia for the "old world" of Yiddish culture. He believes that the weakened condition of Yiddish gives its champions leave to be second-rate and gives him the right to rant like a fishwife in a public arena. He promotes his own self-interest behind the mask of Jewish causes and shamelessly trivializes the Holocaust through mindless personal invective.

Fortunately, Yiddish also yields a tradition of respect for words, ideas, arguments, and persons. Its highly self-critical culture inspires an ongoing demand for excellence and truth. The critic weeds the garden to help it grow. Those who cast themselves as weeds should not expect to be treated like roses.

Socialist text?

To the editors:

Jonathan Mahler writes that Seth Lipsky, the recently deposed editor of the English *Forward*, was "painstakingly faithful" to the ideals of Abraham Cahan, his Yiddish forebear ("Forward Halt," May 1). Cahan's legacy is complicated, but Mahler's attempt to wrap Lipsky in his mantle is unjustified. Mahler fails to mention that Cahan's *Forward*, though never a party organ, supported the Socialist Party until 1934, when it decided to support Franklin Roosevelt's presidential candidacy. During Cahan's tenure, the Yiddish *Forward* carried the slogan "Workers of the World, Unite" on the masthead. By contrast, the English *Forward* under Lipsky's editorship claimed to be neither socialist nor even liberal. The most Mahler can say is that Lipsky is not a neoconservative, though Lipsky himself "doesn't take offense" at the label. This is a far cry from being "painstakingly faithful" to Cahan's vision. It would be more accurate to say that Lipsky's *Forward* supported Cahan's ideals the way a rope supports a hanging man.

Tony Michels
Assistant Professor of American Jewish History
University of Wisconsin—Madison

Silent right

To the editors:

In his otherwise thoughtful piece defending the Warren Court's decision, in *Miranda* v. *Arizona*, that suspects must be informed of the right to remain silent, Jeffrey Rosen suggests that the *Miranda* ruling be mended to allow police to question suspects for, say, twelve hours without informing them of their right to a lawyer ("Right Should Remain Silent," May 1). His rationale is that the state has an interest in pressuring suspects "to act against their own best interests," an interest that can't be accommodated if suspects are informed at the outset of their right to counsel. The problem is that this makes sense only on the assumption that interrogated suspects are guilty or have something to hide. But, as Barry Scheck, Peter Neufeld, and Jim Dwyer point out in their recent book, *Actual Innocence*, it is common for perfectly innocent suspects to make false confessions under police interrogation: of the 62 wrongly convicted persons discussed in the book, 15 (or 24 percent) falsely confessed.

It should be clear that the state has a strong interest in not extracting false confessions (since this means that the guilty are not apprehended) and should be deeply worried about trampling on the rights of the innocent no less than on the rights of the guilty. Surely the best way of ensuring that the innocent are protected and the guilty caught is to minimize the number of false confessions. But this won't happen unless suspects are informed of their right to counsel before they are questioned by the police.

Samuel C. Rickless
Assistant Professor of Philosophy
Florida State University
Tallahassee, Florida

Still going

To the editors:

I attended the SNCC conference Jason Zengerle reported on in his article "Laughter and Forgetting" (May 1). Although Zengerle didn't seem to connect with those at the conference, that wasn't true for me or for others under 30 whom I talked with there. Zengerle didn't mention the inspiring work people are still doing 40 years after SNCC's founding. Nor the groundbreaking "Walking Wounded" project and the long-term cost of this citizenship work. Nor the idea-provoking talks by Diane Nash, Tim Jenkins, Casey Hayden, or Bob Moses, among others. Betty Mae Fikes, one of the most renowned of the freedom singers to come out of the movement, didn't seem to me to be anything less than energetic, vital, and inspiring as she paid tribute to Nash. These kinds of connections between an older and younger activist/organizer cohort are the sorts of links Charles Payne, in his book *I've Got the Light of Freedom*, showed to be so effective in the 1960s. There is still so much we might learn from and with SNCC people, if we are open to it.

Wesley Hogan
Cincinnati, Ohio

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LAGOS DIARIST

Fixed

MIDWAY THROUGH BELLview Airlines Flight 204 from Abuja to Lagos, Nigeria—shortly after a delightful in-flight lunch of warm fish-paste sandwiches—our pilot made the following announcement: "Now is speaking Captain Popovich. Weather outside plane is nice. Weather in Lagos also nice. Soon we land Murtala Muhammed Airport." Captain Popovich was a Serb, and a Serb of few words. He was also, I would soon see, a Serb with bloodshot eyes, a three-day growth of beard, and a shirt held together by an inch of thread and a gallon of sweat. But neither his appearance nor his taciturnity could dampen my excitement as we approached what is possibly the worst airport in the world.

MILLIONS OF AMERICANS WHO HAVE never left the United States are familiar with Murtala Muhammed: until recently, the FAA required U.S. airports to post notices at all security checkpoints warning travelers that the airport was extremely unsafe. And, for a long time, it was: corruption was said to be universal—everyone from customs officers to desk agents was looking for shakedowns, and passengers risked being robbed outside, or even inside, the terminal.

POPOVICH BROUGHT US IN LOW—disconcertingly low—over Lagos and wrestled his DC-9 to the ground. This was a moment of great joy, because our plane was by all appearances the oldest DC-9 in the world and, paradoxically, a virgin to mechanical inspection. Like most African airlines, Bellview—one of several private companies that have filled the gap left by the collapse of Nigeria's state airline—flies what might be called "pre-owned" jets. And Bellview is actually one of Nigeria's better airlines. Several years ago, in Monrovia, Liberia, I saw an airplane owned by ADC, another Nigerian carrier, crash a mile short of the runway. No one was killed, but a more recent ADC crash in Lagos killed everyone aboard. The feeling among people I talked to was that ADC was good at taking off but not so good at landing.

AS THE DC-9 TOUCHED GROUND, I looked out into the elephant grass that surrounded the runway. It is in the elephant grass that the notorious Murtala Muhammed luggage brigands were known to hide. They worked like this: As soon as a plane touched ground, the thieves would roll logs onto the runway, preventing the plane from reaching the terminal. Once the plane was trapped—it's not easy to back up a jet airliner—the thieves would bum-rush the runway, jimmy open the baggage compartments, and disappear into the grass with as many suitcases as they could carry on their heads. An extraordinarily efficient system: At most really bad airports, bags aren't stolen until they reach the terminal.

MY LANDING AT MURTALA MUHAMmed was a disappointment, however. We arrived at the inconsequential domestic terminal, which is infused with none of the flavor or pathos of the international one (and which, by the way, no longer exists—it burned down the week after I left Lagos). Since I was traveling with a man of great influence in Nigeria, we were met by various fixers, whose sole job is to stand between the (usually white) passenger and the reality of the airport. At most airports in Africa, fixers are considered optional; at Murtala Muhammed, they are mandatory.

MANDATORY, THAT IS, ACCORDING TO everyone except Nigeria's president. I had started my trip in Abuja, the Nigerian Brasilia—a new, entirely artificial capital whose airport is mostly empty and mostly efficient. (People in Islamabad, another artificial capital, joke that their city is ten minutes from Pakistan; Abuja's relationship to Nigeria is much the same.) While there, I had breakfast with the Nigerian president, Olusegun Obasanjo, who scolded me for traveling through his airports with fixers. Only by experiencing Murtala Muhammed without them could I test his recent airport reforms.

I TOLD HIM I ACCEPTED HIS CHALlenge. On my departure from the country, I would make my way alone over the many hurdles between the curb at Murtala Muhammed and the (please, God) waiting British Airways 747 on the tarmac. But my Lagos hosts refused, so I was walked through the check-in process by a fixer.

IT REMAINS MY BELIEF, HOWEVER, that I would have done fine alone. At the new and improved Murtala Muhammed, signs are posted everywhere demanding passenger and official alike not to "patronise touts" and to avoid "giving or receiving bribes." At the check-in counter, people more or less stood in line—something of a miracle for Nigerians, who are, in their demeanor and generally aggressive posture, the Israelis of Africa.

THIS IS NOT TO SAY MURTALA MUHAMmed is likely to be mistaken for the Frankfurt airport: at least 150,000 people crowded the terminal, including many who could accurately be described as "touts." And nothing in the airport actually worked: the main arrival and departure board did not list arrivals and departures. Instead, it repeated the letter "A" over and over and over again.

BUT BY FAR THE MOST IMPORTANT thing not working was the air-conditioning. Ordinarily, lack of air-conditioning is not Africa's worst problem. People here put up with far worse—for instance, malaria, AIDS, famine, and death. But Lagos is pizza-oven hot, and the temperature inside the terminal approached 95 degrees, with a humidity rate of about 100 percent. It was so hot I found myself asking strangers, almost against my will, questions like "Hot enough for ya?" which is one of those expressions, like "Have a good one," that I refuse to use on principle.

BUT I WASN'T SHAKEN DOWN ONCE, even after I finally ditched my fixer. In fact, by the standards of the continent, Murtala Muhammed started to look pretty good. After all, a few years ago I was shaken down seven times in seven minutes at the Lungi International Airport in Sierra Leone. My passport was seized by a Lungi police official, who held it overnight for "safekeeping." The next day, he charged me a $20 "holding fee" before giving it back. He charged this even after I told him Warren Christopher was my uncle.

NO SUCH PROBLEMS AT MURTALA Muhammed. As we took off—on time—into the night sky, I noticed that the city below was almost completely dark. In this city of 10 or 12 or 14 million, virtually no one receives a steady supply of electricity. And these are citizens of one of the largest oil-producing countries in the world. Nigeria is one of the great failed states of the postcolonial era. But Obasanjo could become the best Nigerian leader in a generation, and he is confronting the corruption and violence that have crippled his country. He is moving slowly, but his reforms can already be seen at Murtala Muhammed. After all, what do new regimes inevitably do when they want to show they're in charge? They seize the airport.

JEFFREY GOLDBERG

JEFFREY GOLDBERG is a contributing writer at *The New York Times Magazine*.

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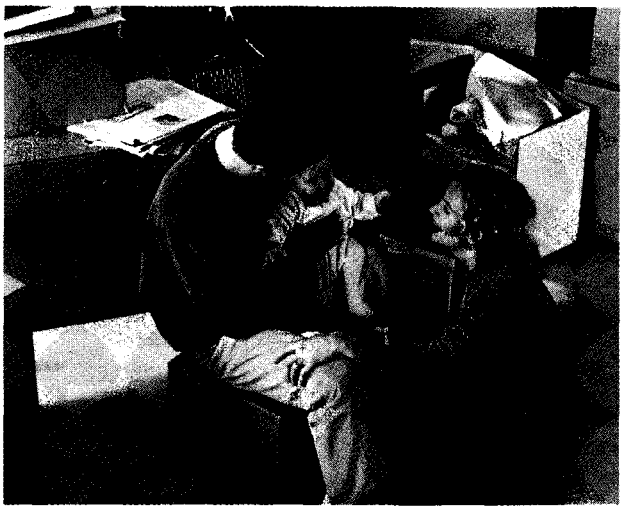

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